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IN THE BALANCE

THE public has often been told since the catastrophe in France last year that the next week or the next ten days or the next fortnight was to be the crisis or even the supreme crisis of the war. The Nazi habit of threatening us with imminent destruction from the air, on the sea, or by invasion, and Hitler's fondness of foretelling, like Old Moore, that something portentous is going to happen on the 15th of next month, have encouraged such cataclysmic prophecies. As a matter of sober fact, since Dunkirk there has been only one moment when the war reached a supreme crisis and our fate hung in the balance; the moment began almost exactly a year ago and lasted for three months. It was the air battle over Britain, and by winning it we did not win the war, but the ability to continue the fight.

The last week has shown that now again in this August the war really has reached a crisis, perhaps a supreme crisis, for on the Russian battlefields, if the Red Army continues to hold, the time must soon come when the fate of Germany as well as of Russia will be in the balance. Bitter experience has taught most of us that in war it is safest for the British always cheerfully to take the darkest view of things, particularly future things and Allies. Consequently, six weeks ago when Hitler launched his armoured hordes against the Soviet Union, the most optimistic only dared to speculate how long the Red Army might avoid destruction.

The Nazi hordes went off with a rush and there must have been moments of great danger to the Russian armies during the first three weeks. Then the rush slowed down. The amount of detailed information which the High Commands give regarding what happens and where is exiguous, but it seems clear that during the last week the rush had slowed down to such an extent that there was during that time practically no movement forward into Russia. The arrows on the little maps in the daily papers have not moved for a week and the vast mass of men and machines stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea have remained locked together, killing and being killed, destroying and being destroyed, attacking, defending, counter-attacking, but neither advancing nor retreating.

There is a limit to what men and machines can endure even in modern warfare. The mere fact that the vast battle-front sways but no longer moves shows that the battle, perhaps the war, is now at its crisis and in the balance. Military experts expect every day the third wave of the German offensive. The third wave is traditionally the most critical and the danger that the Russian armies may yet be broken has not passed. But the moment is very near, if not already arrived, at which the German armies will also be in danger. For Stalin is safe if he can hold the Germans; Hitler is in imminent peril unless he annihilates the Russian armies. He cannot afford to be indefinitely entangled in a grapple with those armies, and unless he destroys them he cannot disengage himself from the death grapple in the East in order to meet our offensive which must threaten him in the West.

The tenseness of this situation has been reflected in the last few days in Tokio, Vichy and Madrid. A certain hesitation has been noticeable in all these places, an inclination to allow the policy of "collaboration" in the Axis crusade against Bolshevism to wait for a time upon events before Leningrad, Smolensk and Kiev. President Roosevelt's order forbidding export of aviation fuel and oil outside the Americas, except to the British Empire and countries resisting aggression, is read as a democratic counter-offensive against Tokio, and it is to be hoped that this means that the rumours of possible leniency to Japan and to American exporters of oil through export licences were mistaken.

All these facts, which show that this time it is no exaggeration to speak of a crisis in the war, only emphasise the point which we made last week of the importance of offensive action on our side against Germany. Hitler must annihilate the Russian armies because, if he does not, he will be faced with a war on two fronts. But that also means that we can hinder or prevent him from annihilating those armies if we give him a war on two fronts, or, better still, on three fronts—for, after all, we are still in the Mediterranean—at once. When a great war—or anything else—is in the balance, the decision

depends upon getting just a little more into the right scale at the right moment. Surely it must be the right moment when the German armies and air force are locked in that terrible and terrific embrace on the Eastern front—and it is a moment which may not recur.

The Atlantic Bases

There are degrees of subserviency even at Vichy. Frenchmen say that Admiral Darlan is sincere, in a queer, warped fashion. If he is, he has managed to persuade himself that co-operation in the New Order is the right policy for France. When the United States approached him on Indo-China, he is reported to have replied that he preferred to have the Japanese or Germans there rather than the British. At the same time a certain resistance to the latest German pressure has been offered by the French Cabinet. The demands were brought from Paris by the contemptible de Brinon, and consisted of a demand to protect Dakar, Casablanca and other North African ports against the "imperialistic designs of foreign powers"; and also of a plan to reinstall Laval in the Cabinet, presumably as Minister of the Interior. Darlan stood on the armistice terms and refused, stiffened possibly by what is happening in Russia and by a plain-spoken message from the United States that their relations with France would depend upon her endeavour to protect her territories from aggressive Powers. De Brinon has returned to Paris, leaving behind him the Cagoulard gangster-chief. The Vichy ministers are caught in their tragic entanglement of dishonour. They are threatened on the one side by Germany with treatment of Unoccupied France not as a collaborator, but as a conquered country. On the other side, the French people are seething; something like martial law is imposed in Savoy against "communism," which is merely a name for the fury of the decent French against the progressive enslavement of their nation. It is said that if the Government had not refused Germany the people would have risen in revolt; but it is only too probable that Dakar is being used as a fuelling-station for U-boats and commerce-raiders, whatever the formal position may be.

Mr. Bracken's Dilemma

Political Warfare, like Production, is to have no generalissimo in the War Cabinet: so Mr. Attlee informed Parliament on Tuesday in terms intended apparently to convey finality. What are the implications of this announcement in respect to the Ministry of Information? The arrival of a new broom in Malet Street has so far been signalised by the resignation of one senior official and the departure "on leave" of another; and journalists also report a welcome growth of warmth in the Departmental atmosphere, so far as promises of quicker and ampler access to news are concerned. Political warfare, however, is not synonymous with the dissemination or even the interpretation of news; and before Mr. Brendan Bracken can attempt to organise and staff his unhappy Ministry effectively he must first decide what its scope is to be. He has inherited from his luckless predecessors an intolerable legacy—responsibility not only for censorship and release of news (over which he can exercise adequate personal control), but also for propaganda, whose execution is largely in the hands of organisations other than his own Ministry. This absurd situation obviously cannot continue. Either the Minister of Information must become the effective, and not merely the titular, controller of all the executants of propaganda, or he must divest himself wholly of that particular responsibility and restrict the functions of M.O.I. to dealing with "information" in the limited sense of objective news and the factual and pictorial description of events. Since the former course would involve the surrender by the Foreign Secretary of part of his authority—for policy and propaganda are indissoluble—it seems unlikely that Mr. Bracken will succeed in making himself *de facto* Minister both of Information and Political Warfare. In that event, if he is wise, he will choose without more ado the one logical alternative, and leave propaganda to the manifold aspirants—Foreign Office, Service Ministries, B.B.C., etc.—already active in that disputable field.

The Home Front *(by an Industrial Correspondent)*

The one really strong point the Prime Minister made in the course of the debate on production was when he asked his critics what superman they wished him to appoint to the post of co-ordinating controller of all the ministries concerned. For the plain truth is that, among the available personalities in the political world, there is no really suitable candidate. Lord Beaverbrook is not by nature a co-ordinator, but rather someone who badly needs to be co-ordinated himself. Ernest Bevin, who might do the job, will not give up the Ministry of Labour; and, as long as he stays there, it is exceedingly difficult to put anybody else over his head. The Prime Minister might perhaps fancy Sir John Anderson; but the public would not have him at any price. Neither Mr. Attlee nor Mr. Greenwood is nearly strong enough; and—in effect—who is there? The required superman may, of course, exist outside the known circles of political leadership; but being known is one of the first conditions as matters stand. That is why Mr. Churchill can ride off so easily from his critics, despite the weakness of all his other arguments. So we must make up our minds for the present to do as best we can with Mr. Bevin's Production Executive, and hope that the recently strengthened Area Boards now directly under that body will in future prove strong enough to tackle the problems of undrained capacity and misused man-power by way of local co-ordination.

* * *

Now that the Uthwatt Committee's first report has given some actuality to questions of reconstruction policy, and Lord Reith has shown signs of taking his duties seriously, despite the Government's failure to establish a real Planning Authority, the political parties are sitting up and taking notice. Mr. Butler, the new President of the Board of Education, is presiding over a committee set up by the Tory head office; Transport House has set up a similar committee under Mr. Shinwell; and both Liberal Parties have created machinery of their own for the consideration of post-war problems. At the same time, Lord Reith has, in effect, divided the Ministry of Works and Buildings into two separate departments—the Ministry proper, and a nucleus "Planning" department to work in connection with the new Committee of Ministers. This latter body has so far only a small staff; and it is still uncertain how far the town and region planning sections of the Ministry of Health are to be transferred to it, or to work under its authority. But there is at any rate a beginning; and it looks as if Lord Reith is ready to make use of all the powers he can get. With this small advance towards "Planning" goes the creation of an emergency building organisation under Mr. Hugh Beaver and Sir Ernest Simon, with a mandate to "co-ordinate" the small builders and introduce some order into the present local chaos. But until the promised legislation amending the Town and Country Planning Act has been produced and explained, it will not be possible to tell how much real advance in these fields is being made.

* * *

The demand of the agricultural workers for a minimum weekly wage of £3 has been postponed, if not altogether rejected by the Board. The decision of the Parliamentary Labour Party to back the demand shows that the uneasy verbal compromise between the Labour Members of the Government and the "sound money" men is soon to be tested. Should the combined pressure of the Labour Party and the T.U.C. succeed there is no doubt we shall have further demands for wage increases by industrial workers in agricultural districts. A new note is struck in the controversy by *The Record*, the organ of the Transport and General Workers' Union. They emphasise that inflation can be avoided by a proper system of price control and rationing. This is the first time an influential union has adopted a positive and constructive attitude to this crucial problem. Until now we have merely had a firm refusal to face facts and wishful assurances that a drive for further voluntary savings would stop inflation. If the unions remain adamant and stiffen Mr. Bevin, we shall have the strict controls which are necessary to organise the country for a total war effort. But, willy-nilly, they will have to reconsider their attitude on the so-called democratic system of unco-ordinated wage bargaining which still confounds their whole attitude to the war-economic problem. The debate on coal has shown the necessity for discriminating in rations in favour of heavy workers. The inquiries on the standard of living of larger families has demonstrated the necessity for family allowances. In these and many other instances the T.U.C. attitude has remained purely negative, mainly because of the haunting fear that diminished sectional bargaining power would mean the decline of the influence of the union officials. The implementation of the Essential Work Order was retarded and in many respects stultified because the Unions tried to use it to extort "closed" shops instead of insisting on speed and decent working conditions. There is perhaps some hope now that the T.U.C. will reconsider its basic attitude. It could use its immense influence in building up a really democratic system of central controls to ensure not merely equality of sacrifice, but also efficiency in production untrammelled by private vested interests. It could stake claims for an adequate share for labour in the "deferred purchasing power" of the nation after the war. The excited protests of some Tory diehards about the powers taken by the Government to remove inefficient managements shows clearly in what direction progress to a better economic organisation in war and peace lies. It is for the reconstruction committees of the Labour Party to comprehend these signs.

One of the worst bottlenecks in our war-economic system—due mainly to the mistaken principles of reservation, based on the experiences of the last war—was and still remains the supply of heavy labour which industrial traditions insist on calling "unskilled." The lack of heavy labour in the building and allied trades in particular is the cause of constant annoyance and delays. Electric supplies cannot be extended in time, the building of fortifications, airdromes and vital factories, as Mr. Bevin indicated in a frank speech, is behindhand. The Army still refuses to learn from the experience in Germany, where the introduction of the principles of a "dual purpose army" enabled such quick demobilisation of urgently needed workmen whenever there was a lull in fighting that the Nazis up to the last fling against Russia have been able to maintain total employment *above* pre-war levels. The new piece-work regulations do not promise to be successful in obtaining bigger effort, as they fail to give *progressive* inducement for higher output. Under these conditions one would at least expect that the inadequate supplies of precious building labour would be carefully safeguarded. Indeed, the authorities have all the power needed, as all building operations costing more than £100 must be licensed. And what do we see? An infuriating boom of unnecessary building. The Leicester Square Cinema has been refurbished, new restaurants are opened, Christies is being rebuilt, the City is being tidied up (yet the valuable store of scrap is not being removed). Even Chatham House, which is visited by so many American experts, did not seem to consider it fatuous to embellish of all places its lecture room. It is shocking to see this mismanagement of the man power of the country, which not merely impinges on the war effort, but will make a coherent planning of physical rebuilding more difficult.

The Coal Debate (*by a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

As a result of the coal debate, Members expect Grenfell, on Churchill's well-known principle of promoting his failures, to be made either a Cabinet Minister or a Colonial Governor with Cabinet rank. Whatever his fate, Grenfell deserves all he gets. He made it quite clear yesterday that he has all along been opposed to the policy of allowing miners to drift from the mines or of calling them up. He knew what the result would be in terms of coal production. Yet he was content to carry out a policy with which he did not agree rather than resign. Every Member who spoke blamed the Government for causing the present dangerous coal situation through blundering, shortsighted policies. With the exception of Aneurin Bevan and Buchanan, none of them sought to bring the responsibility home to individual Ministers. Bevan spoke in the lunch hour to a thin House, which was obviously impressed by his courageous, vehement speech. He declared bluntly that the Prime Minister, and the Prime Minister alone, was the Minister responsible for the coal shortage. He refused to allow the miners to be released from the Army because he "thinks about these things romantically and not realistically, and the brass-hats advise him stupidly." He blamed the House itself for allowing the Prime Minister to get away with it. The House knew last spring the position which was developing in the coal industry. It expressed its views, but it had not faced up to its responsibilities by telling the Prime Minister that, unless he put things right, Members would go into the Division lobby on the matter.

Buchanan also trounced the House for its failure to bring home the responsibility for the coal shortage to individual Ministers. We were short of coal but apparently no one was to blame. There was to-day a P.S.A. atmosphere about debates, and the Churchill tie had been substituted for the Old Etonian tie. Knox declared roundly that he was against taking men required in industry for the Army, and as a much despised general he would vote for the return of the miners.

The complete failure of the Government to conscript property was forcibly brought home to the House by Tinker, who mentioned mine after mine that was being closed down without any discussion with the Mines Department. Tom Smith, speaking from the Labour Front Bench, made a vigorous attack upon the Government. In this he set a welcome example to his colleagues, who, with the exception of Shinwell, speak from the Front Opposition Bench merely to dot the i's and cross the t's of the Government case. Duncan, in replying to the debate, once again displayed his astuteness. He weighed the various factors, favourable and unfavourable. If the favourable factors predominated, as he hoped, we would get enough coal. As Clement Davies said after the debate, Duncan offered us hope instead of coal and the housewives of the country should therefore learn to cook with hope instead of coal.

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WINDOW DRESSING IN INDIA

WE have made a good many mistakes in this war and paid the penalty with a good many failures, but our most gratuitous mistake, and therefore in some ways our worst failure, has been and is in India. Has been and still is, for the Viceroy's new declaration about the widening of his Council and the creation of yet another Indian body with no political power is the same again, the same dreary business that has been going on now in the India Office and India for the better part of two years. It is imperial window dressing in the approved British twentieth-century style, and, as is usual in wartime, the shop window, even when dressed, has precious little in it—three dozen extremely worthy, but entirely irrelevant, Indian and Anglo-Indian gentlemen.

Of course, a case can be made out for the British Government and for these "reforms" as a "great step on the road to Indian self-government." Mr. Amery made it in the House of Commons debate, though not with much conviction. The Governor-General's Executive Council has been enlarged from 7 to 12 members, and it will now contain a majority of Indians and of non-officials ; a new body, the National Defence Council, has been created, composed of prominent Indians who will advise the Governor-General on the war effort and will help to keep the Central Government in close touch with the Provincial Administrations. And so the Government of India can say that now for the first time the highest executive organ, a kind of War Cabinet, as the *Times* puts it, contains a majority of Indian public men who are not officials and "are as representative of and as responsive to public opinion as is possible under present conditions." That is what they can and do say, but it is just display and window-dressing, for it is completely irrelevant to the realities of the lamentable situation in India, and makes no contribution to the problem with which, largely through our own fault, we are faced there.

The realities are these : the only two political parties in India which count for anything, the Congress Party and the Muslim League, will have nothing to do with the Government of India or with these reforms, while Nehru and dozens of men who really are "representative of and responsive to" Indian public opinion, instead of being on the Governor-General's Executive Council, are in His Excellency's gaols. Yet these men, now in gaol, and the powerful parties which they represent are upon our side in the war and have more than once offered the Government of India their support. The support is offered upon terms which the Government has persistently rejected, namely, that if we are fighting this war for democracy and against authoritarianism, we should show that we practise in India what we fight for in Europe, and prove by acts, not words, that we are going to allow Indians to govern themselves.

That is the unpleasant reality of the Indian situation, which makes the gentlemen now appointed to the Governor-General's Council, though they are distinguished, worthy and Indian, nevertheless irrelevant. It is a reality which should make even an imperial angel weep, for it is the one large black spot upon our case and our cause against the Nazis. If it were not for India, three-quarters of the world would say that the British were fighting this time in a just cause with clean hearts, in so far as imperial hearts can be clean ; as long as Nehru and the Congressmen are in gaol, the cause is compromised and the cleanliness spotted.

The problem in India is both difficult and simple. We are an old imperial people and we have centuries of experience behind us. About 170 years ago we already began losing "colonies" for the same reasons and in the same way in which Lord Linlithgow and Mr. Amery are now losing India. That at intervals throughout the 170 years we should repeat the folly of George III and North is peculiarly exasperating, because we have shown ourselves in many ways capable of learning from that imperial experience. Nearly all the success of the Empire in the nineteenth century, and the many things in its history of which we may be proud, were due to the learning of that lesson. And yet periodically we seem to become historically blind and completely lose our imperial memory. We do in Ireland what we did in America, in Egypt what we did in Ireland, and now in India what we did in Egypt. And every time the imperial angels weep.

That is why the problem is simple. We know everything that there is to know about it. We begin with a "subject" or "colonial" people. The fundamental principles of our life and government make it inevitable that, sooner or later, that people will demand from us self-government. The right to self-government is so deeply a part of our tradition that we cannot and dare not, as some other peoples

without that tradition, blankly refuse it. And so we do not refuse it; we promise that we will grant it the day after to-morrow—always the day after to-morrow. Then begins a now well-known process of demand and concession by which the patriotic, Tory British imperialist, with heroic and stubborn stupidity, prepares the way for imperial disruption. His method is always to refuse a concrete demand for some further measure of self-government at the moment when it is made by, and would satisfy, the "subject people," and to concede it as soon as the concession is useless because the subject people, exasperated by the original refusal, is now pitching its demands higher. The end of this process of being eternally too late is inevitable; when the demands have been forced up to the point at which there is nothing more extreme which could be demanded, i.e., when the demand is for complete independence and secession, and the people are in armed revolt against us, and it is too late to conciliate them, then at last we give way and grant them independence or Dominion status.

That is what happened in Ireland and the process took about 100 years to work itself out. The same thing has been happening for a quarter of a century in India, but, since the pace at which the twentieth century moves from disaster to disaster is much quicker than that at which the nineteenth progressed from triumph to triumph, the final catastrophe in India may be expected much sooner than it came in Ireland. It is as a stage in this process of demand and refusal that the extension of the Governor-General's Council must be considered. Roughly, the concession is probably about five years too late. If it had been made when the Congress Party was co-operating in the government of the Provinces and there were Congress Governments in many of them, it might have been the first stage towards a complete and satisfactory solution of the Indian problem, for representatives of that Party might have agreed to enter the Governor-General's Council, even though it remained constitutionally only advisory. To-day, with the Congress Party withdrawn from Provincial Government and its leaders in gaol, an Indian majority on the Governor-General's Council without Congress representatives is simply irrelevant.

The moral is that, if we are not to move blindly to the final catastrophe and the final "concession," we just make a concession to-day which meets the demand of to-day. That does not, of course, mean that the Government must concede everything which the Congress Party has asked for, but it does mean that it must meet the substance of that demand. It could do this by beginning at once the process of converting the Governor-General's Council from an advisory to a responsible executive organ and by offering seats on the Council to the Congress Party and Muslim League roughly proportionate to their political strength. If we are to convince Indians of the sincerity of our promise to concede Dominion status, we must take an immediate step towards substituting their authority for ours in the centre of Indian government. If that is coupled with an amnesty for political prisoners, we shall have built a bridge for the co-operation of Congress in Central and Provincial government, and if Congress crosses the bridge, Mr. Jinnah will probably have to follow.

So far we have been dealing with the simple part of the Indian problem. The difficult part of it is created, as in Ireland, by a minority. But to hide behind the difficulty, as we did in Ireland and have been doing in India, is to make disaster ultimately certain. The Muslim League is now the Indian Ulster and its intransigence is partly due to our handling of the problem. To pass from authoritarian to democratic government is always difficult—indeed the very nature of democracy makes it always a difficult form of government—but to say, as we have been doing, that we cannot make the passage until the majority and minority are in agreement, is to turn democracy upside down. It immediately creates an *impasse* and an Ulster, for in practice it amounts to saying that the majority must give way to the minority. In the end the political relations of Hindus and Muslims must be determined by the Hindus and Muslims; our primary responsibility is to carry out our promise and to take the first steps in transferring power from our hands into those of an Indian democracy. To do that we must get the co-operation of the largest political party in India, and, if we do, the minority will almost certainly have to follow the example of the majority. That will break the existing deadlock, which is the essential thing at the moment, and then the working out of the constitution for an Indian democracy must be left to Indians. It is during that working out that we, having established our good faith, may hope, as a now impartial friend of both parties, to have some influence as a mediator and so safeguard the rights of both the majority and minorities.

HIGH STAKES IN THE PACIFIC

THE initial roar of the Democracies' anti-Japanese sanctions a fortnight ago seemed to dwindle rapidly to something between a whistle and a squeak, but may again become stentorian. Everywhere British Empire, American and Dutch measures were first heralded as a total embargo of trade with Japan. A formidable engine of power had been set in motion to restrain and challenge Japanese aggression, but the motor is at present sputtering on only a few of its cylinders.

Two days before the American administration froze Japan's assets and then prepared partly to thaw them by creating a general licensing system for exports and imports, President Roosevelt for the first time divulged his reasons for permitting American oil and other supplies to flow to Japan during the years of Japanese aggression. The President told the Committee on Civilian Defence Organisations at the White House that "there was what might be called a method in letting this oil go to Japan with the hope—it has worked for two years—of keeping war out of the South Pacific for our own good, for the good of the defences of Britain and for the freedom of the seas." He indicated his belief that a more rigid policy towards Japan would have endangered the stream of supplies from Australia and New Zealand to the Near East. "If we had cut off the oil," he concluded, "Japan would probably have gone down to the Dutch East Indies a year ago and you would have had war."

Japan herself, however, may make it impossible for the democracies to pursue a policy even of semi-appeasement, just as Hitler's rashness in 1939 frustrated the intention of British political and industrial leaders to continue placating Germany. A couple of days after Roosevelt's freezing order the American press reported that restrictions against Japan would probably be applied leniently and that licences for exports to Japan, especially for oil and cotton, would be granted generously. In a Boston broadcast, Raymond Swing questioned whether the American Government meant business against Japan and coolly remarked that there is a stage before freezing, usually known as slush. If the United States continued to sell oil to the Japanese, it was clear that the Dutch East Indies, strategically vulnerable, would refuse to embargo oil shipments and thereby attract Japan's full wrath. Cotton producers and merchants of India were also disinclined to sacrifice profitable Japanese markets if they were merely to be grabbed by the American cotton trade.

News that Japan was preparing to push her southward advance from Indo-China into Thailand and was dispatching considerable armed forces to Manchuria, where they would divert or immobilise Russian power, meanwhile suggested that the democracies' half-baked measures had failed to deter Tokio. Roosevelt showed himself aware of this by tightening American economic sanctions another notch: the effect of his second order is to prohibit export of motor fuels and oil suitable for aircraft and to reduce sales of other American petroleum products to Japan. Even this action leaves loopholes for the export of a wide range of oil products, and, while those gaps remain, it appears doubtful whether the Dutch will drastically cut Japan's supplies.

Roosevelt's candid utterance, quoted above, indicated that he has long believed America's involvement in war with Japan would reduce the ultimate chances of defeating Germany. This must be one of the most difficult and is certainly among the most important problems the President has had to face. Here are some of the factors which he has had to consider.

On the one hand, many Americans are more ready to fight Japan than Germany, and the Pacific may provide the shortest path which will bring the United States into the war. Then, too, by engaging Japan's entire armed power, America would enormously relieve, if not entirely dispel, the Japanese threat to the Soviet Union, leaving Russia free to throw her whole strength against the Germans. Similarly, Japan's occupation in a Pacific major war might lift China from stalemate to victory. Moreover, if America becomes a belligerent even against Japan, her production will reach heights unattainable while she is nominally at peace. Finally, by going all out to smash one of the Axis Trinity, America would strike fear and despondency into Germany's heart and correspondingly encourage Britain, Russia and the occupied countries.

There is a minority of Far Eastern experts in America, of whom the able writer, Nathaniel Peffer, is the most articulate, insisting that America should avoid war with Japan even at the cost of seeing Japan conquer Hongkong, Singapore, Netherlands East Indies, and other Pacific treasures. This school argues that the fate of Japan will be decided in the Atlantic, European, Mediterranean and Russian war zones, and that the smashing of Nazi power would make a later war against Japan a walk-over for the democracies.

On the other hand, say what you will, America's diversion to the Pacific would appreciably curtail her swiftly growing help to the Allies. America's navy, of which perhaps a third may now be active in the Atlantic, would be urgently required and heavily engaged in the Pacific. Every weapon, every soldier, sailor and airman, and all the supplies needed against Japan would weaken America's immediate counter-threat to Germany. Nor can one ignore the possibility that Japan might succeed in blocking Dutch East Indies, Malayan and other Far Eastern supplies, including oil, rubber and tin, invaluable to the Allies. If Britain became America's co-belligerent against Japan, as would be practically inevitable, British forces would be drawn from the Middle East to Asia, a comforting prospect for the European part of the Axis.

It is obvious, therefore, from these considerations that the question whether an American-Japanese war would favour or hamper our ultimate defeat of Germany is very complicated, and that a merely emotional or glib answer is worthless.

The British and Netherlands Governments were given less than 24 hours' notice of Washington's decision to freeze Japan's assets. It is fair to say that America's sudden move took three Governments by surprise: the Japanese, the British, and the Dutch. Britain and the Netherlands at first understood the United States to be intent upon the complete economic quarantining of Japan, and so they acted promptly and incisively. But when they began to suspect that American measures resembled the League's patchwork 1935 sanctions against Italy, Britain and the East Indies wondered whether they had crawled out on a fragile limb ahead of the United States.

This experience shows that we should not expect the Dutch, in their position of weakness and exposure to Japanese attack, to fall in line with us without our promising to defend their territorial integrity. The democracies' defence line runs from Free China through Singapore, Philippines and the East Indies to Australia. A British-Australian-Dutch alliance should come next. We cannot count on America's full participation in such a pact. Would it be too bold, however, to suggest that Roosevelt, having proclaimed Dakar to be America's easternmost defence post, should declare the East Indies to be its western bastion?

We must finally face another, even more vital issue: our common interests with Russia in the Far East as well as in Europe. We have always side-stepped this, many years before Stalin shook hands with Ribbentrop and embraced Matsuoka. Although there has never been a public official elucidation of that interesting point, the British-Soviet alliance of July 13th is assumed by many people to be inoperative in East Asia.

While Russia was Germany's helpmate, influential British leaders would clearly have preferred Japan to spare our Empire in the south and turn north against the U.S.S.R. To-day there are few Britons who would regard with complacence a Japanese war on Russia. And yet—with strong Japanese reinforcements now arriving in Manchuria—we should like to be surer that some of the men who shape our foreign policy realise that Russia's defeat would be a far graver, long-range danger than the immediate jeopardy of our Far Eastern domains. It would be comforting to know, for instance, that Sir Robert Craigie, our ambassador in Tokio, and even Lord Halifax in Washington, do not place the imperial school-tie above our ties with Russia. Such doubts would vanish once and for all if the Prime Minister were to announce that east and west meet in our alliance with the Russians.

CARS, BUTTER OR GUNS?

WASHINGTON, *July*.

DURING the first six months of this year the sale of automobiles to civilians in the United States rose by 35 per cent. when compared with the same period of 1940. Similar goods tell the same story, for the sales of refrigerators rose by 42 per cent. and of electric cookers by 51 per cent. In these figures you have a nearly adequate picture of life in America to-day. Its focus is everyman's motorcar; by it the average American lives; one might even say that he lives for it. Necessity and luxury at once, it settles his social standing and satisfies his love of romance; it is all that his steed was to the Bedouin of Mrs. Hemans. It follows that the statistics of its sale and manufacture will tell you nearly all you need know about the trends of American life. From these figures we may at once draw some confident conclusions: America is prosperous and she is not yet throwing her main effort into the work of defence. The choice for Germany lay between butter and guns; the choice for America falls between guns and cars. Up to midsummer of this year she had shirked it. To be precise, defence, including all she was making for Britain, China and Russia as well as for herself, accounted only for 15 per cent. of her total volume of production.

The spread of prosperity over this Republic is not yet uniform, but in varying degrees the rising tide of profits and wages is fertilising the entire territory. A Gallup poll asked voters the other day to confess whether they are better off than they were a year ago. Thirty per cent. agreed that they had gained. There was a net gain to register everywhere, but as one would expect, it was highest in the industrial areas, New England and the Central States, and lowest in the South and the Pacific Coast. Starting in the heavy industries, it gradually affected the output of consumers' goods as a whole. The loss of export markets would have depressed the farmer, especially when his cash crops are cotton and tobacco, had not Congress taken care of him. The business index of the *New York Times* has reached the high figure of 131.

The reader has already made his own comments on those motor-car figures. If America had dedicated herself to victory, as her President would have her do, she would have cut instead of raising her output of cars, refrigerators and electric ranges. With very little adaptation, the plants that make these things could turn out airplanes and tanks. Steel is already alarmingly short; the metal that should have gone into the hulls of tramp ships is now rushing at high speed over the roads that link the booming cities with the bustling holiday resorts. The skilled labour which the war industries lack is still ministering to the luxuries of the civilian population.

Over these painful facts controversy rages in all the newspapers and magazines. The Administration is every sharpshooter's target; the Left assails Big Business, and it retaliates by cursing organised Labour. Few have a good word to say for O.P.M. (Office of Production Management), the central agency in charge of the war effort. If the chief mistake has been the determination to carry on Business as Usual, and the chief field where this mistake has raged the automobile plant, it is significant that Mr. Knudsen, the head of O.P.M., is in daily life the President of General Motors. Very reluctantly the industry was persuaded to cut its programme for the coming year by 20 per cent., and it has since agreed to a further reduction by another 20 per cent., which will, however, take effect only after the lapse of another month. These cuts will reduce the inflated output of the past year, but they leave manufacture close to the high level it had attained, midway, in 1940, when the boom was already well under way. There would be no serious hardship in cutting production near to vanishing point, for the supply of used cars is ample.

In this situation, facing a shortage of electric power, steel, aluminium, copper, nickel, magnesium and rubber, the debate swings uncertainly between the two alternatives—to cut civilian consumption or to expand plants. Big Business, aware that scarcity is its wealth and looking ahead to the expected post-war depression, resists expansion, but likes the curtailment of its sales no better. The public is so little accustomed to sacrifices that it showed some distress over the threat to forbid the sale of petrol in the Eastern States on Sundays, because of the shortage of tankers on the Atlantic coast. The Left, obedient to its faith in an economy of plenty, calls for the expansion of plant all round, without much heed to the short-time effect upon the war effort. Without doubt, the instant expansion of the aluminium industry is necessary; our command of the air may turn upon it. But the case for expanding the steel industry is doubtful. It is working to its full capacity to-day, which means that it can produce 90,000,000 ingot tons in a year, about half the world's output. O.P.M. has demanded an expansion of 10,000,000 tons a year. Its reply, if one may trust its figures, is significant: less than 25 per cent. of its output is being used for defence. It seems to follow that the necessary additional supplies for the war industries could be found more promptly by a moderate cut in civilian consumption. It would not suffice to build new rolling mills; new ships and freight cars would also be required. The most puzzling instance of this dualism in policy is the insistence of the President, backed by the Left, on the immediate adoption of his St. Lawrence Seaway project. Certainly this ambitious and beneficent scheme ought to have been carried out years ago, when he first proposed it. But it cannot now be completed in time to assist the war effort and it would use large quantities of steel and the services of skilled men who are urgently needed elsewhere. On the other hand, it would be an ideal scheme with which to combat a post-war depression.

The clear and urgent case for expansion is that of aluminium. This industry is a nearly complete monopoly. Aleoa, as it is commonly called, shared with the Germans the leadership of a world-cartel which delimited markets, restricted output and maintained

prices. But the singular feature of its later compact with the German industry was that it was bound to restrict its output, while the Nazis were freed from any such limitation in return for an undertaking to renounce exports. The result was that Göring had at his disposal all the plant his air-fleet needed, while America's capacity was strictly limited. Expansion, forbidden by an agreement which breaks several laws of this Republic, ought to have started when America first pledged her aid to the Allies. But Aleoa stubbornly argued that it had all the plant demanded for defence with something to spare, and until the other day O.P.M. accepted its complacent figures. To-day, in a rush of genuine alarm, the real facts are admitted, and Mr. Secretary Ickes has trounced Aleoa in a bitter philippic. The main trouble is that the making of aluminium uses up incredible quantities of electric power, and here again we face an entrenched monopoly's preference for scarcity. New dams will have to be built and new turbines erected; the work has already started in the Tennessee Valley, but it cannot be completed in a day. Meanwhile, a terrifying shortage darkens the outlook for defence. The figures which Senator Mead, as chairman of an investigating committee, read out in the Capitol the other day show that by March, 1942, the Services will require for aircraft and other arms 100,000,000 lb. of aluminium a month. Production capacity will then be 75,000,000 lb. There is, therefore, a prospective shortage of 25,000,000 lb. a month, which allows nothing whatever for civilian needs. The plans of O.P.M. contemplate the erection of eight new plants which will one day lift production by 50,000,000 lb. a month. In the meanwhile, the only hope is that the patriotism of the housewife, who is piling up her pots and pans in every city round the statues of America's heroes, will for a brief moment compensate for the greed and short sight of her industrialists. But while she gives to the army, the dwindling stock of aluminium is still going into the fabric of pleasure cars.

At this date the counter-offensive of capital against labour is hardly worth recording. There were some inexcusable strikes, which made a just perceptible reduction in the number of aircraft that crossed the Atlantic. But that chapter of history is closed. Not a single "wild-cat" strike has broken out in the defence industries since Hitler struck at Stalin, though a few local disputes drag on. Two changes within its ranks altered the mood of the C.I.O. Its Communists redrew the party line, while its Catholics took their cue first from the Pope's silence and then from a broadcast sermon by Bishop Hurley, lately a member of the Vatican Secretariat, who translated the reticence of Rome into the plainest American words. The result is that while in the first six days of June 230,200 man-days were lost by strikes in the defence industries, the corresponding total for July was 72,700. To this changed temper the capitalists and the politicians have responded. Congress in the angry days of June had welcomed three drafts of legislation which not only turned the intervention of the army in strikes in the defence industries into a lasting and mandatory institution, but even made striking a criminal offence. In the calm days of July, by big majorities it swept all this rubbish away.

It is not generally realised that the men in aircraft factories had the best of reasons for their claims, though some of the strikes were unnecessary: their minimum hour's wage stood at only 50 cents, while men doing comparable work in automobile shops got 75 cents. Broadly, the justification for most of the numerous disputes which started round March of this year was the claim of the men to share in the mounting profits of industry. Up to that month, thanks to fuller employment and overtime, the income of the workers had risen, but it was only then, after a year of high profits, that wage-rates belatedly rose. Coal-miners were the first to benefit; then the average hourly wage-rates of the steel industry rose by over 15 per cent., and those of the New England cotton mills by 10 per cent. Most of this was clear gain, butter as well as guns, for the cost of living is still almost stationary. The urban cost of living index of the Department of Labour stood in round figures in the middle of May at 103 (100 = average 1935-39). It is doubtful whether this level of retail prices can be stabilised, for the general index of wholesale commodity prices had risen in June, 1941, by 16 per cent. since the outbreak of the war. The price controllers (O.P.A.C.S.) believe that this can be done, but few share their confidence. But if they should fail, it may still be possible for the Mediation Board to adjust wages to any moderate rise in prices without grave disturbance. Capital in this boom yields readily; witness the startling transformation of all Henry Ford's works into a "closed shop." Labour, in short, is now the least of the perplexities that beset the war effort, though there are local but not yet national shortages of skilled men, which may affect whole States. The major problem is the menacing shortage of crucial raw materials and the difficulty of cutting civil consumption, while incomes are rising, in a community which has not been schooled to submit to rationing. When this nation decides to dispense with new cars, we may count with some confidence on victory.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

THE END OF ECONOMIC PARENTHOOD

FEW people would agree that the factors determining the birth-rate trend and the root causes which led us into this battle for existence are intimately related phenomena. Most people would dismiss the suggestion that a sixty-year decline in reproductivity and the occurrence of two internecine wars between slightly different environmental types of the human species are twin expressions of one and the same thing. Hardly anyone would subscribe to the idea that there is a correlation between the growth of monopoly capitalism and the production and sale of contraceptive devices. Admittedly these are strange fellows. Their apparent incongruity may be because no one has yet placed them together in the same bed. Or perhaps we are too close to the war and too casual about the birth-rate to connect them. Whatever the reason, we may note that there are only two causes *under human control* which can lead to the extinction of *homo sapiens*. One is the apparent aptitude for, and effectiveness of, mass suicide; the other is the failure to reproduce.

During the past century man has had placed in his hands—but not in his head—the means of controlling his environment and his stay on earth. The growth in the power of this control has been curiously but significantly paralleled by a continuous rise in the use and efficiency of the two "extinction" forces. The greater the power to control the more mechanically destructive does war become. The higher the standard of living the lower the rate of human replacement. The more man gets away from primitive sustenance the more deliberately destructive he becomes and the less willing to bring into the world his own kind. In the violent history of the human race this is the first time two great concentrations of population—Britain and Germany—have fought and killed while failing to replace their numbers. Both entered the war with a net reproduction rate below unity.* Whatever Hitler may claim for his New Order, at no time since he assumed power has the German birth-rate been sufficient to replace existing numbers. Europe, as an entity, fell below unity many years ago. This war must mean either a tremendous speed up (in terms of reproductivity) in the process of the dying out of the human race, or a complete reversal in our way of life so that an environment will emerge in which parents will *desire* children.

For thousands of years man had no control over his birth-rate and no control over his death-rate. At the end of the nineteenth century, when the world was a wretchedly poor and miserable place, two controls began to emerge. Sanitation preceded contraceptives, first because its advantages were easily recognisable and, second, because capitalism decided that hygiene spelt dividends. At about the same time the masses began to discover the means of controlling their birth-rate. This discovery was first utilised by the highest economic class and has since filtered down the social structure until to-day, in Britain, it is beginning to be used fairly widely by the unskilled workers. This war, for the most obvious reasons, will intensify to a far larger extent than the last one (which involved a net loss of over 500,000 unborn) the knowledge and use of control. Since the birth-rate trend changed it has fallen by half in sixty years and before the war net reproductivity in England and Wales was 25 per cent. below replacement level. The same trend—in different stages of development—is discernible not only in Europe, but in America, the Dominions and Japan; in fact, wherever we have a reliable register of statistics covering a sufficiently long period. Owing to the inadequacy of the data (particularly for the past) it is not possible to discern the probable trend of the birth-rate for the masses of the U.S.S.R., China and India, but we do know that, whatever course it takes, the already vast populations of these countries are bound to rise within the next fifty years by hundreds of millions. The effect of an enormously increasing Asiatic population on the future of man raises the most fundamental questions, which cannot, however, be discussed in this article.

We are concerned here with the trend in the highly industrialised capitalist societies and in studying the development of their replacement rates we are led to ask why has man persistently and to an ever-increasing degree used this control? The causes are multiple and closely

* Unity means that every one thousand newly born girls will, before they die, give birth to one thousand girls.

interwoven, but the fundamental factor is, I suggest, the psychological atmosphere of a society which places acquisitiveness before children. Man's desire to serve the community—and one way in which he can best do this is by consciously and deliberately desiring the continuance of his own kind—has been increasingly negatived by a society which tells him to seek his own interests, individually and nationally; to regard wealth as an index of biological success; to attain power through wealth; and to relegate morals to a two-hour session of platitudes on the seventh day. For a century we have preached the value of morals and practised the immorality of acquisitiveness. To sustain this cultural pattern it was necessary for captains of industry and statesmen to foster the illusion of mobility in a socially static, unequal and caste-ridden society. In this atmosphere frustrated man was forced to decide that "he travels the fastest who travels alone." In the competitive, yet relatively wealthy, suburbia of South-Eastern England the Tudor cloisters and birth control barracks return what is, in all probability, the lowest birth-rate in the world. This is not mere chance. Urban birth rates are lower than rural, and the higher one ascends in the social scale the lower is fertility. This pattern is but the ineluctable consequence of a society which not only presents and preserves enormous class differences in health and wealth, but which is dominated by acquisitiveness. Personal attitudes towards parenthood are conditioned by social values and children are economic handicaps. The environment of the twentieth century is an unpleasant, unhealthy and immoral blend of acquisitiveness and fear. It depends on one's status and cultural background—on Mayfair, the City of London or the Public Assistance Committee—whether one strives for more money or whether one struggles to hold on to what one has. The illusion that social success flows from a competitive life still holds. That it is only an illusion for most is clearly shown by the growth of monopoly. What is true of industry applies also to the individual. Both the non-combine industry and the non-privileged individual batter unavailingly against the brick wall of a highly immobilised society. A ceaseless socio-economic struggle goes on between individuals and groups of individuals in the belief that mobility is possible and unaware of the chains of a static society. There is no breathing space, no rest (as there was when success under free competition was possible for a few), so the struggle for success and for survival becomes more and more demoniac. In this atmosphere of frustration children are not desired, or, if they are, the economic disability overcomes the desire. So man increases his control over reproduction and thereby expresses in a biological sense his feelings of moral frustration. From an enforced inarticulateness in the nineteenth century, man, by the use of contraceptives, vents his sense of frustration in the twentieth by striking against parenthood. A frustrated society is a morally unhealthy society, and all that has happened in international politics from Versailles to Munich is but an outward expression of an inward disease. As Masaryk once said: "Civilised man is ever seeking health and happiness, yet is unhappy and unhealthy. With all his civilisation he is pitifully lacking in culture." There is no place, no time, no room, no rest for culture of the soul in a world swept and tarnished by acquisitiveness. It is a highly significant but hitherto unnoticed fact that France was the first major power to register an inadequate replacement rate. Yet as we now know, France did not collapse simply because her armaments and her generals were incompetent; the reasons are the same deeply rooted and fundamental causes as those which have determined her reproductive trend. She now stands, like Petrarch, "on a frontier that divides two peoples, looking both to the past and to the future."

Modern war is a temporary index of a morally unhealthy society; a declining replacement rate is a permanent expression of the same thing. The former results from man's physical control over the internal combustion engine, the latter from control over fertility. In both cases he is destructive of life; he kills the living and destroys the desire to reproduce. In both cases he registers his moral frustration. This war, then, is not simply another traditional battle between Britain and Germany; neither is it just another example of human nature indulging in periodic war. To generalise, it is a reflection on a mass scale of the individual's disease. It bears all the marks of a climax in the upward development of man towards co-operation. We are, in other words, "between two worlds, one dead and the other powerless to be born." We have reached the end of an era and to survive the war we shall have to make vast and permanent changes in our way of life. If we do not make these changes we shall fail to survive through a refusal to reproduce and some other species, perhaps a race of sub-men, will arise to take our place. The change from uncontrolled reproduction to the conscious control of births is as essential to a rational world civilisation as it is epochal. But unless we translate the unconscious demand for a co-operative rational civilisation into reality, then control means extinction.

The end of the last war failed to reverse the birth-rate trend and so will this if it is but a military war followed by a traditional military peace. Thus, not only are we fighting to survive in the sense of nationhood, but we are fighting to release that deep, long-frustrated desire in man to serve humanity and not self. RICHARD M. TITMUSS

AN OCCASIONAL LONDONER'S DIARY

I FIND it difficult to sympathise with the holding up of outraged hands of intellectual bewilderment and holy horror over the so-called changes of front by the Communists. Most Communists seem to me to have been absolutely consistent, consistent, that is to say, in their constancy to Socialism and to the fortunes of the one country in which Socialism has been achieved. The fact that the Communist compass has so frequently veered is evidence not of irresponsibility or caprice, but simply of the fact that the political magnetic north to which with unvarying fidelity it points, has so frequently altered its position. In other words, the policy of Russia has changed.

But what of it? In what sort of glasshouses, pray, do *we* live that *we* should throw stones at those who change their policy? Consider for example the policy of those who have desired above all things the continuance of the position and the promotion of the welfare of the British governing class. Three years ago they were for appeasing the Nazis; now they are for fighting them. During the appeasing period they sought to make an alliance with Germany against Russia; now they have made an alliance with Russia against Germany. Or consider the policy of those of us who desire above all things to beat the Nazis, because we believe that both the continuance of civilisation and the freedom of our country depend upon victory. Through what bewildering metamorphoses has it not passed, bewildering, that is to say, to an observer who did not know our political magnetic north. Take, for example, our views about the Finns. Little more than a year ago the Finns were few and virtuous; now they are many—I have recently come across the expression "Finnish hordes"—and well . . . not so virtuous. Eighteen months ago we desired they should beat the Russians; now we desire them to be beaten by the Russians. A few years ago many of us admired the French above all peoples and regarded France as the apogee of civilisation. To-day we are apt to look down our noses at the French because they are not so good at giving and taking punishment—that is to say, at slaughtering and being slaughtered—as . . . well certain other nations.

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It is then, I submit, a little disingenuous of those who have been compelled by the chances and changes of the times in which we live to change their policies, their valuations, their emotions, and their wishes, to profess the astonishment to which Mr. Cummings, for example, has given such frequent and contemptuous expression in the admirable columns he contributes to the *News Chronicle* at the changes in Communist policy. The position is really very simple. British Communists are anxious for the victory not of a country, but of a faith. They want to see a world which is free from undeserved poverty and social injustice, and they believe that it cannot be freed, until it is rid of capitalism. Now the overthrow of capitalism throughout the world is bound up in their view with the survival and success of Soviet Russia, the one country in which it has already been overthrown. Therefore whatever contributes to such survival or success is good and should be supported; whatever threatens it is evil and should be suppressed. Before the war the chief threat was thought to come from the Nazis, and Communists, therefore, were violently anti-Nazi. Then came the Russo-German pact and the Nazi danger was diminished by the preoccupation of Germany with the war in the West. Consequently there was nothing to be gained by vigorously prosecuting a war against the country with which Communist Russia was at least temporarily associated. Then came the Nazi invasion of Russia and the main threat to the Socialist revolution was once again from the Nazis. Inevitably, the policy changed again and full support is given to a war against the Power whose invasion endangers the revolution. Thus the devoted sheepdog turns first against this wolf and then against that, not because it is capricious in its choice of enemy, but because it is continuously faithful to its charge, the protection of the sheep.

The inference is as plain as a pikestaff. The Communists are now wholeheartedly behind the war effort and—if so unlikely a metaphor may be pardoned—are probably more royalist than the King in their

desire to maximise production to beat the Nazis. It is only a government incurably incapable of arguing from general principles which could be guilty of so gross a mistake as the continued banning of the *Daily Worker*.

* * *

A friend who is on the staff of a northern hospital told me a disturbing story of a young German airman who was brought in badly wounded and suffering from severe loss of blood. It was clear to my friend that, unless the airman could receive a blood transfusion he would die and this was explained to him. He vigorously repudiated the proposed transfusion saying that he could not tolerate the pollution of his Aryan blood. Humouring his prejudices, the doctor promised that only the blood of a donor of guaranteed Aryan blonde type would be used. He still refused. There were many generous donors on the books of the hospital and, hoping to allay his fears, the doctor arranged for six of the tallest, the pinkest, and the blondest, to be brought in and introduced to the prisoner, so that he could see for himself that it was no "dark" blood that was to be introduced into his sacred, Nordic veins. But it was no use. He said he would sooner die than submit to blood pollution and die he duly did, struggling against the beneficent hands that were preparing to administer an anaesthetic.

* * *

Before the "V" campaign in this country peters out beneath the waves of triviality in which the efforts of door-chalking errand boys, the facetiousness of gossip writers, and the whimsies of fashionable young women, with their V-shaped bodices, ear-rings, *coiffures*, and for all I know V-shaped toe-nails, finger-nails, and what-nots—why, one wonders, cannot we take up anything without making a "rage" of it and then killing it by the vulgarity of our "raging"—have combined to engulf it, may I suggest a serious musical treatment of the theme by the B.B.C. What we all know is that the three dots and a dash, the morse code sign for "V," symbolise in musical notation the opening bar of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. What many of us do not know, or do not until some musically knowledgable person instructs us, is that the same rhythmic combination runs throughout the symphony, notably in the second subject of the Scherzo, where it is given out by the wind instruments. Moreover, though the symphony as a whole develops in and through conflict, in the *Finale* conflict is resolved and we get the most triumphant musical expression of victory that has ever rejoiced the ear of man. The whole symphony, indeed, lends itself to literary description which seeks to assign meanings—readers will remember the classic account contained in the fifth chapter of E. M. Forster's *Howard's End*, beginning: "It will be generally admitted that Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is the most sublime noise that has ever penetrated into the ear of man. All sorts and conditions are satisfied by it."—to a degree unexampled in first-rate music which, having for the most part no meaning, usually makes nonsense of literary descriptions. Now all this is very difficult to convey by writing, but by talking, judiciously illustrated by musical examples, it can be conveyed very well. I suggest, then, to the B.B.C. a talk on the topical significance of the themes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, and if they want to know who should be asked to do it, I make them a present of the suggestion of James Ching, whose admirably illustrated expositions of classical music over the wireless have been one of the outstanding B.B.C. musical features during the last six months—the best thing of their kind since the great days of Sir Walford Davies.

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At the "local" the talk turned on fishing. The landlady was commenting on the enthusiasm of her lodger who was devoting his fortnight's holiday to fishing in the river behind the pub. "Every day he goes out," she said, "and all day he stays out. And one night he stayed out all night too." The landlady did not object to this zeal, regarding with a benevolent contempt efforts so prolonged resulting in catches so minute. But what she couldn't abide was the zealot's talk. "Fish, fish, fish! He talks about nothing else day and night. I never so much as want to hear the word fish again so long as I live. 'I shan't bring my ration book,' he wrote, when he said he was coming, 'I shall catch all I want to eat, so I shall do my little bit to save the country's food supply.' Oh, talked very big, he did." "And did he save the country's food supply?" I asked. "Well, he did, but not quite the way he expected. You see, the only things he caught were eels, and they wriggled so when he tried to kill them—I ought to tell you he is 'a gastric,' he is—that it quite put him off his food. Hardly a thing has he eaten all the week." A pity, I thought, that efforts so well-meant should have so "gastric" a reward.

My friend X tells me that he has never used his ration book. He lives in a service flat during the week and has all his meals except breakfast out. No coupons are required for the foods consumed at breakfast and no coupons for the meals out.

My friend Y owns three cars, of which one only is in use. For each car he gets a separate supply of petrol. This enables him to keep one car running full time.

Z (not my friend) is a manufacturer of male clothes. He tells me (1) that since the number of coupons required for a suit does not depend upon the value of the suit people insist on demanding the best suits and only the best, since the best last longer. (2) that since the number of coupons which he requires for the purchase of wool or cloth does not depend upon the quality of the wool or cloth, he now only uses the best since the turnover on an expensive suit is larger and his profit therefore is larger. Here then are two reasons why cheap suits and, for all I know, cheap shoes and cheap shirts are becoming increasingly difficult to obtain.

The moral of X, Y and Z is familiar enough. Rationing which is designed to equalise things for rich and for poor, only too often increases the inequalities that already exist.

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At a well-known sports shop the proprietor told me that during the last six months he had sold 30 per cent. more golf clubs than his peace-time average. I don't know the moral!

* * *

I see that Lord Halifax has been telling American aircraft workers that we are hoping to "alter the outward appearance of Berlin and make parts of it look like London does now"—in other words an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. As a back-sliding Christian to a famous one, I take leave to draw his attention to the gospel according to S. Matthew V, 38 and 39. OCCASIONAL LONDONER

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to Harold Gibbons.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

The reception arranged for Miss Dorothy Thompson by Lord and Lady Kemsley . . . provided a striking example of the process of social fusion which is a feature of our times, with persons of high distinction in close conversation with others having no claim to distinction other than that they work hard at their own jobs.—*Daily Sketch.*

They missed—as who does not who has ever known it—the wonderful spirit of brotherhood which was the hall-mark of the old Regular Army, in many of its aspects the nearest approach to a Christian fellowship this country has known.—*National Review.*

Are we not the instruments of Divine Retributive Justice, and must not our Cause therefore be secure? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? If He fails us in this issue His very character is suspect. . . .—Prof. Maurice Ralton in the *Church of England Newspaper.*

Another V note. Daphne Barker, possessor of longest finger-nails in town, has them painted red with white Vs.—*Evening Standard.*

When Lady Crosfield came from Greece to London as a young bride she was accomplished in music and tennis. But, she tells me, she discovered that tennis was more important than music in England. That's why she concentrated on tennis.—*Evening Standard.*

STORY OF THE BAYONET
A Weapon That Reveals National Character
—*Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.*

Self preparation for Modern Sainthood (genus Heard-Huxley) is tough. We will help you.—Advt. in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

Mr. Marriott's views will be heartily endorsed by the Chairman of the Northampton Juvenile Court (Mr. G. W. Beattie), who has repeatedly advocated whipping, and recently told one young scapegrace: "I should like to give you a good thrashing myself, even although it would hurt me more than it would you," whereupon the impudent young urchin merely assumed a cynical smile.—*Northampton Independent.*

World History always works itself out with a greater richness and complexity, with more twists and turns, than even the most powerful political insight, the insight of the great masters of Marxism, could attempt to plot out beforehand in detail.—Mr. R. Palme Dutt in the *Labour Monthly*.

MATTHEW ARNOLD AS CORNISHMAN

IT is curious that in considering the personality of Arnold and the character of his work, nobody has paid any attention to the fact that he was, on his mother's side, Cornish. Yet it was an important part of his make-up, and in personal appearance he took after his mother's family, the Penroses, and not after his father. His niece, Mrs. Humphry Ward, says that of Dr. Arnold's children

> Matthew and Thomas had derived from some remoter ancestry—possibly through their Cornish mother, herself the daughter of a Penrose and a Trevenen—elements and qualities which were lacking in the strong personality of their father. Imagination, "rebellion against fact," spirituality, a tendency to dream, unworldliness, the passionate love of beauty and charm, "ineffectualness" in the practical competitive life—these, according to Matthew Arnold, were the characteristic marks of the Celt.

Some of these characteristics are evident enough in Arnold and conspicuous by their absence in his father, a masterful administrator, the keynote of whose temperament was practicality and push.

It is well known what a remarkable degree of sympathy there was between Matthew and his mother; it is not difficult to discern that there was less sympathy between the Doctor and his eldest son. Very much in the background during her husband's life, or given up to frequent child-bearing—it was no sinecure to be the wife of Dr. Arnold—after his death she emerges as a personality of her own, the chief confidante of her brilliant son, with whom he discussed all his literary projects, his books and criticisms of them. His letters to her show what an intelligent, reading woman she was, living on at Fox How, the centre of a wide and interesting circle.

She was Cornish on both sides. The old lady used to tell how when her parents left Cornwall, her mother made the carriage stop on the border, got out and stooped down to kiss the ground farewell. That would be in the year 1801. But Fledborough, in Nottinghamshire, whither they were bound, soon became the focus of a happy family life. (It has been described in a pleasant book by the Rev. A. B. Baldwin: *The Penroses of Fledborough Parsonage.*) Years later Matthew wrote to his mother from the neighbourhood: "I looked affectionately in the bright morning towards Fledborough; my recollections of it are the only approach I have to a memory of a golden age." So much for Rugby under his father!

The Penroses—there were four generations of Johns, all of whom were parsons, in a direct line—sprang from the Rev. John Penrose, who was vicar of St. Gluvias by Penryn: you see the church-tower among the trees looking down upon the quiet waters of that creek of the Fal. He was parson there for 35 years, and ended with the felicity of an epitaph in verse by Hannah More. His son was Matthew Arnold's grandfather; and when you look at his portrait you see that the poet got his traits from him. There is the same high, thin forehead, the refined sensitiveness, the peaked look even, the keen lively eye, and unmistakably, the nose, prominent but with fine lines: all bespeaks the Penrose ancestry, not the Doctor, that blunt, manly face of a hearty with the puzzled expression. There is no puzzlement about Matthew's face; there is all the refinement and clarity of his grandfather, but turned into melancholy.

That there was an underground sympathy with and interest in Celtic things in Arnold, his work puts beyond question. It was that which led him to write "Tristram and Iseult," "Saint Brandan," a few other poems, and culminated in his Oxford Lectures, *On the Study of Celtic Literature.* This side of his work springs from nothing in his education, which was severely classical, or his environment, which was very academic and broad Church. We may take it that it was due to a latent bias of which he himself was unaware. "Tristram and Iseult" was always a favourite poem with him; he never said why. But it is more pictorial, has more vividness and life than most of his poems. But it is sad to think that Arnold seems never to have been in Cornwall, that such passages as

> Tyntagel on its surge-beat hill,
> The pleasaunce walks, the weeping queen,
> The flying leaves. . . .

are but generalised phrases: if he had been there he would not have written of pleasaunce-walks or leaves, for there are no trees or gardens in that wind-swept spot. Nor would he have scanned Tintagel with the accent on the first syllable: a mistake which had to be corrected all through the poem in the next edition. All the same, Arnold was first with his poem on the Tristram theme; thirteen years before Wagner, twenty before Tennyson, while it was to his schoolboy passion for Arnold's poem that we owe Swinburne's "Tristram of Lyonesse."

Arnold was attracted to the subject by a series of articles by the Breton *savant*, the Comte de la Villemarqué. "Saint Brandan," the last of his narrative poems, also has a Breton provenance, in this case Renan's essay on *The Poetry of the Celtic Races.* He had met Renan when in Paris in 1859, and was struck with a curious similarity of outlook and even of tendency between the Frenchman and himself. There is an interesting passage in the *Letters* about it, but no awareness that the reason for the bond of sympathy, the similarity of outlook, was that Renan was Breton and Arnold half-Cornish. (Long before reading this passage, or realising the Cornish strain in Arnold, I used to think of Renan as, in a way, a French Arnold.) He was even more indebted to Renan's essay when he wrote his *Study of Celtic Literature.*

This is an extraordinarily interesting book and has a place of its own in Arnold's work. Of course, one does not read it for its information about Celtic languages and literature. But that does not mean that it has nothing to say. Its message was that the Celtic contribution to the English mind was a valuable one; that there were certain qualities which the Celtic peoples possessed in a high degree, that made a desirable complement to Teutonic characteristics: an instinctive tact and grace, delicacy of feeling, a natural concern for things of the mind. These things were just the corrective needed against the Philistinism of the British middle-class. It was in the Introduction to this book that Arnold made his celebrated definition of Philistinism. He started by questioning the prevailing orthodoxy of the day as to the composition of the British people. He had been brought up in the straitest school of Teutonism by that unmitigated Teuton, his father. But now he did not believe that the Britons were annihilated by the Saxon Conquest, or even so completely absorbed as to leave no traces of themselves among the English people.

Arnold's instinct was a sound one and largely corroborated by modern scholarship. It is odd that he should have had a much more correct view than the whole nineteenth century school of historians: Stubbs and Freeman, Green and Froude were all pro-German on the subject. Arnold's views must have seemed paradoxical, not to say hardly serious, in the Victorian climate of opinion, such was the ascendancy of German sympathies not only among the historians, but in literary circles, and on lower levels, the Court, the theologians, popular journalism. The *Times* was only expressing the prevailing view when it said: "Not only the energy and power, but the intelligence and music of Europe have come mainly from Teutonic sources." Arnold was described as a "sentimentalist . . . whose dainty taste requires something more flimsy than the strong sense and sturdy morality of his fellow Englishmen." He did not take this much to heart: he was no favourite with the *Times.* Nor, as a matter of fact, was the *Times* with him; he described its obituary of Macaulay as "a splendid exhibition of what may be called the *intellectual vulgarity* of that newspaper." However, his Oxford Lectures brought him not only the satisfaction of contradicting the *Times,* and his father, but the practical success of founding a professorship of Celtic.

Still, there was something in what the old *Times* sensed, if it did not put its finger on it: his *difference.* Half the standards of the great Victorian middle-class he neither subscribed to nor respected, even if he pretended to. He was different. His sympathies were French; his tastes, unlike Dr. Arnold's, were aristocratic. And where did he get his pernickety delicacy from? his sensibility and airy elegance, his fastidiousness and persiflage? Certainly not from the Doctor. Where did he get his supercilious disapproval of English heartiness, his positive and persistent hatred of middle-class vulgarity? Certainly not from the Doctor. Some people put it down to Oxford, but Oxford produced nobody to rival him on this ground, not even Pater.

Still more, where did his extraordinary melancholy come from? By all ordinary standards he should have been a happy man. He had a happy family life; he was happy in his children, in the fame which he enjoyed, in his own varied achievement, his public work and position, the pleasures of social life. Yet all the while there is in his poems, arising like an aroma from his letters, written all over his face, the unmistakable impression of an incurable melancholy. A recent re-reading of his *Collected Poems* has left me convinced that his is the most despondent body of poetry of all the great English poets.

I do not suppose that that is necessarily Celtic. He had his own philosophical justification: the retreating sea of faith. But that is too rational an explanation. The root of it lay beneath that, in his temperament. And his temperament was essentially and recognisably Celtic: gaiety on the surface and in Society—and at bottom, when alone with himself, a profound dejection. It is out of this that practically the whole of his poetry is written.

Can it be then that Arnold, in discriminating certain qualities in the English and their literature as Celtic, was making, as is often the way with writers, an unconscious revelation of himself, or what he desiderated in himself?

A. L. ROWSE

SIMPLE PLEASURES

IT was in the *Abinger Chronicle* that Sir Max Beerbohm some time ago made the memorable pronouncement: "What Abinger thinks to-day Dorking will think to-morrow." Probably only those who had long associations with Surrey appreciated the beauty and wisdom of Sir Max's utterance; but, ever since I read it, I have studied the pages of the *Abinger Chronicle* in search of what good and wise men are thinking about life on our rather extraordinary planet. Nor have I been unrewarded in my quest. In the current number of the magazine, for example, what a delight it was to come on the first instalment of Mr. R. C. Trevelyan's, *Simple Pleasures*, a catalogue—but an imaginative catalogue—of the things that a good and wise man living under the shadow of Leith Hill enjoys! Reading catalogues is itself to most of us one of the simple pleasures, though I confess I was at first disappointed in Homer's catalogue of the ships. Who that has ever had even a week-end cottage has not responded to the pianos and fortissimos of a seedsman's catalogue with as much excitement as though he were listening to the Fifth Symphony? Stores catalogues, again, plotless though they are, are at times more absorbing than a Ngaio Marsh detective story. I rate high a catalogue of sports outfits in this branch of literature, and an ironmonger's catalogue seems to me to be better than no catalogue at all.

But a catalogue of simple pleasures! What a vista it opens to the imagination, even though Mr. Trevelyan excludes from his list, not only "pleasures that are mainly artistic and contemplative, such as watching a ballet or a sunset," but those almost universal pleasures belonging to the worlds of games, of sport, and of the palate! The first of his pleasures is, I am afraid, a pleasure I have outgrown—"to watch drops coursing down the window-panes of railway carriages or down the sides of a bath, making a favourite in the race, now of one drop, now of another." To watch raindrops on a window-pane was once, certainly, one of the eager pleasures, though I never shared Mr. Trevelyan's capacity for infidelity to a favourite raindrop. If I put my shirt, as the saying is, on a raindrop, I remained loyal to it even though it slowed down to disastrous defeat. Mr. Trevelyan, in shifting his sympathy so easily to the winning raindrop, seems to me to show a deficiency of Stoic fortitude not usually to be found in Abinger.

Again, I did not see eye to eye with Mr. Trevelyan when he included among the pleasures of sight "an elephant walking." All tropical beasts—elephants, lions, tigers, camels and wolves—have been to me sources of disappointment. Perhaps I expected them to be of much greater size than they are, as I expected Buckingham Palace and Westminster Abbey to be before I had seen them. The lion especially was a paltry creature compared with the animal of my imagination. And the camel, whom I had dreamed of as the sky-scraper of the desert, turned out to be not much more impressive than a moth-eaten donkey. As for the elephant—how does his walk differ from that of a plain-clothes policeman who has been putting on flesh for years in the Capua of Scotland Yard? If I want to see an animal walking, I prefer an old horse clumping his way along the road for a drink in the pond, or a white ox in a plough, or a gander raising his orange feet in the air, or a cat shaking water from its paws as it proceeds across the wet grass.

There is no disputing about pleasures, however, and more than once, as I read Mr. Trevelyan's list of enjoyments, I felt, not critical, but envious. For example: "To watch young rabbits at the edge of a moor, chasing and jumping over one another. To hear the doe, when she is aware of you, thump on the ground a warning to her young with lifted hind-legs." Though I have spent a fair amount of my life in the country, that is a spectacle that I have never seen. I have often seen the young rabbits playing and scuttling from danger, but I have never seen them jumping over each other or the doe warning them of their danger with a kick on the ground. The truth is, many of us see curiously little of the living world about us. I have never even seen a badger, though I have often spent a holiday within a stone's throw of a badger and have sat for hours on the bank of a stream where I had discovered his footprints. Some people are born to see badgers and such things, others not. I am one of the unfortunate. I had spent half my life before I saw a nightingale or a kingfisher. The sight in each case was, I admit, worth the delay.

Happily, there are other pleasures more easily come by. The majority of us, I imagine, have had the same experience as Mr. Trevelyan when he describes as one of the simple pleasures "on a station platform or at a level-crossing to stand within a couple of yards of a train passing at full speed." I should have said myself "within two yards and a half," but Mr. Trevelyan is evidently a bolder spirit. The passing of trains, fast or slow, was, undoubtedly, one of the great pleasures of Victorian childhood. Even grey-bearded men, such as my much-loved professor of English, used to make for a wayside station for the pleasure of seeing the Dublin express rush past with a roar of energy as elating to the spirit as the roar of the sea. Machinery by that time had become beautiful, with its smoke and swiftness and the noise of engines. To the modern child, perhaps, the motor-car and the aeroplane seem more wonderful than the railway train; but to those of us who were brought up in the century of the railway-train none of these modern machines can compare in splendour with that fiery dragon, the steam engine, careering through a wood with clouds of glory in its wake.

There are so many simple pleasures, however—on land, on sea, and in the air—pleasures of the eye, of the ear, of touch, of smell—that no human being can hope to experience the full toll of them. Mr. Trevelyan, for example, includes among them "a donkey's bray from a distance." Pleasure, I think, is too strong a word to describe what most of us feel on hearing a donkey's bray even at a distance. I get more pleasure from looking at a donkey than from listening to it. Nearly all animal noises are attractive in moderation—the neighing of a horse, the lowing of a cow, the grunt of a pig, the cackle of a hen, even (to some people) the bark of a dog—but, if donkeys brayed more often, I suspect we should find the noise as disagreeable as the mechanical jargonings of guinea fowl. If I had never heard a donkey braying, I should no doubt experience pleasure at the novelty of hearing it for the first time. But not twice. One tires even of the comic bandsman who plays a trombone in a music-hall orchestra, and the donkey is no better a musician than that.

Another pleasure of Mr. Trevelyan's that I have never shared is "to go through a house tapping various hard substances with one's knuckles or fingertips, and distinguishing the subtler differences of resonance given out by solid or hollow wood in furniture, panels and doors, by stone or plaster walls, by bronzes and boxes and waterpipes, etcetera." Being of a scientific turn of mind I decided, after reading his statement, to put the matter to the test. I tapped a wall, I rapped a washstand, I hammered lightly on an electric stove, I knocked on a door, I struck the bathroom cistern, I beat my knuckles gently on the metal cowling of the fireplaces; but from all the sounds that resulted I got less of a thrill than from the pong of an old-fashioned sofa with its springs out of order. It may be that I did not use enough violence, or it may be that I have not an ear attuned to this domestic kind of music.

Mr. Trevelyan has obviously so many pleasures that he must often regret that the day consists of only twenty-four hours in which to indulge in them. He goes about the world with the eyes and ears of a poet and at the same time is not above such prosaic enjoyment as that of coming suddenly on "the smell of an unseen brewery or of coffee-beans roasting." He loves to "look down over the bows of a ship in calm weather, and see the prow cutting and clearing the water," but he can also appreciate "the scent of unsmoked tobacco, of cedar wood cigar boxes and spills, of boots and shoes, and of Harris tweed."

As I read his charming Epicurean catalogue, I could not help wondering whether if we all counted our blessings in this fashion, we should not realise with some astonishment that we have been leading much happier lives than we had suspected. Any day can be crowded with simple pleasures, if we recognise them as such—the pleasure of being up early in the morning or, better still, the pleasure of not being up early in the morning; the pleasure of taking a bath, or, alternatively—for tastes vary in this as in other matters—the pleasure of not taking a bath; the pleasure of looking forward to lunch and the pleasure of looking back on lunch; the pleasure of watching pigeons, seagulls and human beings; the pleasure of finding more money in one's pocket than one expected; the pleasure of swallowing a patent medicine; the pleasure of sitting down almost anywhere. These are only a few of the pleasures open to most of us on an ordinary day till at last we succumb to the pleasure of falling asleep. If Mr. Trevelyan continues his list of simple pleasures, the completed work should run to at least fifty volumes.

Y. Y.

WAR ARTISTS

THE warmest applause is due to the Government scheme under which painters are commissioned to record the various aspects of the War, and the resulting works are quickly exhibited at the National Gallery, in the Provinces, the Empire or the United States. If one has hesitated to write about the War Artists Exhibition, it was not from ingratitude to those whose enterprise had made it possible; it was from unwillingness to denigrate in any way so well-intentioned and civilised an undertaking. The first results were, in my opinion, frankly mediocre; and though each successive version of the exhibition has become more interesting, I still cannot speak of it as enthusiastically as I would wish. I can, however, suggest an explanation of its defects that is not offensive.

The principal purpose of "War Art" is to provide information, and for over a century painting has grown less informative. The greatest artists have always been poetic, even those like Vermeer, Goya and Degas, who have been most successful in representing phenomena. But in the past there have also always been since the fifteenth century a number of capable painters making straightforward descriptions of contemporary life. Among the most illustrious of such prose painters, as I would label them, are Ghirlandaio, Carpaccio, Holbein, Teniers, de Hooch, Canaletto, and the Vernets, but they can be counted in thousands. Nor have the English been deficient in such narrators—we have had whole schools of sporting painters, topographers and conversation-piece painters. To-day such painting does not exist in this country or in any other—those who attempt it are mostly practitioners whom no educated eye could mistake for artists. Contemporary art is

expressive or decorative, but hardly ever informative. The organisers of the War Artists scheme have therefore set themselves an impossibly difficult task.

Naturally they wanted portraits of commanders and heroes—but portrait-painting is a lost art; and consequently the portraits at the War Artists Exhibition are at best competent, like those by Mr. Eves, at worst downright common. Who can have commissioned the portraits of Air Marshals Pearce and Joubert? Better, perhaps, leave portraiture to the photographers. Mr. Cecil Beaton could do the job more elegantly as well as more truthfully than the portrait-painters. But what, somebody may say, about Mr. Kennington? His studies of airmen are certainly not inanimate or mechanical—indeed they are most expressive of a heartfelt admiration. But for my part I find them distasteful. I cannot believe that these young heroes look so intense and neurotic, and the violence of Mr. Kennington's style seems to me as hysterical as the eloquence of Hitler.

The pictures of scenes are much less bad than the pictures of persons. Honourable records of wartime life have been produced by Ardizzone, Bawden, Pitchforth, Topolski, Connard, Lambourn, Kapp, M. Carr, Frances Macdonald, Henry Lamb, E. Dunbar, Joseph Bate and James Miller. Sir Muirhead Bone's skill in presenting very elaborate information can hardly be over-estimated. Such works rightly form the staple of the exhibition; their standard has improved considerably since the first batch, and nobody acquainted with the present condition of painting could expect them to be better than they are. Duncan Grant and William Roberts have each provided one picture—and in each case with a success that rather surprised me. It seems likely after all that the best War Artists are quite simply the best artists. But it is conspicuous that several of our most gifted painters have not contributed—Frances Hodgkins, for instance, and Matthew Smith and William Nicholson and Vanessa Bell and Ivon Hitchens and Victor Pasmore. It is arguable that none of these artists possesses the particular talent required, but I suggest that they should be invited to try their hands, since the two artists who have done best are, as I hope to indicate, just those two whose previous work was least informative.

Rightly there has been a quota of paintings with little pretension to be works of art, representations of naval battles, etc., that are quite unconvincing but not exactly dull, panoramas which the public likes and which ought to be provided. But the justification of the whole scheme is found in a few highly imaginative works. The first of Mr. Stanley Spencer's two great panels shows this singular painter at his best. Mr. Paul Nash has made a large series of drawings of British aeroplanes intact and German aeroplanes wrecked. The best of these are remarkable. Mr. Nash is one of our best painters, possessed alike of vision and style; but there seems a danger of his succumbing to a formula. Mr. John Piper and Mr. John Armstrong have treated ruins decoratively, as so many painters have done from Botticelli to Turner. The effect is charming, if a little irrelevant to the War. Mr. Armstrong's very skilful work is too sweet for my tooth, but I like Mr. Piper's painting particularly, and hope he will continue with it. He is a more romantic Panini. There remain Mr. Henry Moore and Mr. Graham Sutherland—the two artists, in my opinion, who have most completely risen to the situation. It is significant that their works are the least prosaic of any in the show. Mr. Moore has been inspired by shelter-life not to represent the higgledy-piggledy human litter that dismays the ordinary eye, but to invent swathed skeletal forms monumentally arranged. He has transformed the squalid into the majestic, the convivial into the macabre, the Bakerloo into the Inferno. I cannot think that these paintings have a much closer relation to the look of wartime life than *The School of Athens* has to the look of an Oxford Common Room. Mr. Sutherland's paintings of ruined London are more factual in drawing, but their colour makes them hardly less fabulous. His use of lurid yellow in contrast with an opulent black transforms the shabby dust-heaps that we know into the furniture of Hell. (I wish that like some of the greatest painters of the past these two artists could be persuaded to collaborate, so that we could see Mr. Moore's gaunt draperies enclosed in Mr. Sutherland's calamitous labyrinths.) Girders are twisted into the tormented and gigantic semblance of human organs, while a sinister spotlight plays erratically to gloat over the devastation. The impact on the spectator is immense. Mr. Sutherland and Mr. Moore have produced tragic art not so much by neglecting the facts as by depicting the effect of the facts upon their imaginations. They have shown war turning men to phantoms, buildings to intestines, order to gibbering chaos. Here a posterity at peace will be able to learn not what we see, but what we dimly yet profoundly feel.

Also at the National Gallery, but unluckily ending at the end of this week, is a show of topographical paintings made possible by the generosity of the Pilgrim Trust. With even the remotest steeple and inn-parlour threatened from the air, to record the pleasant buildings of our land, even on a small scale, is a considerable service. Too many of the artists selected have produced water-colours suitable for a Christmas calendar, giving the facts about a house or street but not what it looks like. Messrs. Kenneth Rowntree, du Plessis, Claud Rogers, John Piper and Thomas Hennell have been the most successful in animating their topography, whereas Mr. Stanley Anderson, for instance, merely edulcorates. A good sketch by Mr. Graham Bell makes one wish for more like it. One hopes that the scheme will persist—and may I suggest that Mr. Morland Lewis is eminently qualified to provide what is wanted?

RAYMOND MORTIMER

LODGER'S LAMENT

THE lodger, that's me. Maybe it all quite rightly accords with our liberal democratic traditions that the landlady should be able to take due advantage of the much honoured law of supply and demand, and this is a reception area where people have clamoured to be received.

Society when I lived in a mining valley was represented to me as being composed of capitalists on the one hand, and workers on the other, and I happened to be on the other. At first to me as a good Nonconformist there were good capitalists and bad, the good ones being good Nonconformists like myself, and there were good workers and bad, the good ones also being good Nonconformists. On learning to Marxify, however, I came to realise that all capitalists, even dead ones, were bad—one just sub-consciously applied the conception of original sin—and that all proletarians, and of course I placed myself in that category, were innately virtuous, each one carrying within him the capacity of creating a new and better world, i.e. a world in which I would no longer be exploited.

It is as a result of living and working in an area such as this, that I have learned empirically that there is a much more fundamental stratification of society than Marx was aware of, but perhaps Marx never lived in digs. Society now presents itself to me as being divided into landladies on the one side and lodgers on the other, and as I always seem to come off second best, I am again on the other: I can no longer believe the Marxian doctrine that the worker is exploited precisely at the point of production, where he is robbed of the surplus value, rather is he exploited and oppressed at the hearth of his landlady, which might more aptly be described as the point of reproduction.

It is not only proletarians who have a historic mission. My landlady is fanatically devoted to the mission assigned to her—that of pumping starch into me, and the more blown out I get the more she compliments (no, not me) herself on how well I look. She aims it seems to re-create me in her own image, i.e. in the form of a barrage balloon.

Now I ate so much bread when I was a kid that by this time each piece of bread had come to taste exactly like the piece before, and here comes to my mind one of the formulations of bourgeois economy. "The more one has of a thing, the less one wants more of it." The economic pudding woman seems to have some intuition of that truth, for she keeps asking: "Would you like some bread with it?" and she generally means with the bread I had before she asked me to have some more bread, and to my very literal "No-thanks," comes the inevitable "Are you quite sure?" This in a tone that is more threatening than requesting.

It puzzled me until I came to diagnose her starch mania why the pudding woman never asked, "would you like some marge, or some cheese, or some jam with it?" Ma compensates for my indifference at meal times, and to my display of as great an interest in the news as in the bread pudding, by talking to me the while about the pudding, or she sometimes breaks out with such a remark as . . . "Fish is so much a pound, and I saw people queueing up to buy it. I would never think of paying that much for fish—would you?" I assure her that I would not think of it, and remark on parachutists landing in Crete.

What a pile one gets on the plate for dinner! Pie—the pastry being to the meat or meat substitute, as ten is to one. Then there are the spuds, the dear old spuds whose presence I always welcome, for they seem capable of retaining their essential characteristics despite all ill-usage. The greens are cooked in the good old English way—only more so, and I always think of them as having been sent to the laundry. To follow this, if I am still batting, is some pastry with dyed starch which is called custard, and by that time I am always sure that I do not want any more—thanks. It would be unfair to pass on without mentioning the Yorkshire pudding, which is made out of some special powder which was introduced to Dumpling by a neighbour, and which looks almost like flour, but is not, and which is so cheap and so easy to prepare, but not so easy to eat.

In my digs I am not to sit on the bed. This I know because there is a notice on the mirror to tell me so. I am not to recline on the couch in the sitting room—it is bad for the springs. I know this because the landlady told me so. I am not to make myself a cup of cocoa if I come in late, because the electricity used to boil the water costs money. I know that electricity costs money (1) because I did at one time work for an electric supply company; (2) because my landlady told me so after my unthinkingly preparing myself a cup of cocoa when I came in late on a Sunday night; (3) because landlady's Mr. also told me so when I once turned on the radio to listen to Mr. Churchill.

One morning I indiscreetly got up late, and landed at the breakfast table the same time as Mr. Dumpling, my attention being drawn to his plate of bacon and eggs by the remark "Dad is having his egg this morning, instead of at tea-time." The ensuing day was the happiest of my life, and my ten hours in the factory I spent looking forward to tea-time. Oh, if tea-time would only come. Came tea-time, only for me to discover that I must have mis-interpreted the remark made in the morning. Dad must have had the egg in the morning, instead of me having it at tea-time. But I did one day get that egg at tea-time. With malice aforethought, I came to the table the same time as Dad. He had an egg, in fact we both did—otherwise he might have had two.

Such strategy only works once, and whenever I should synchronise with Dad's getting up or coming in, then he eats in the other room, where there is the couch that has springs.

KNOBKERRY

THE MOVIES

"High Sierra," at Warner's
"One Night in Lisbon," at the Plaza
"Cottage to Let," at the Gaumont

High Sierra is a goodish gangster piece, the last swallow, perhaps, of the gangsters' summer. Dolls, molls, guns, guys, dope, rocks and can—in such monosyllables a past made inconspicuous by Hitler is revived. *High Sierra* has little to add to the high power dis-

covery of this underworld: a few situations others had overlooked, one or two phrases to add to the lingo—"looks like curtains," says the mad-dog bandit about to die. There are first-rate scenes of a hold-up in a hotel lounge, a final kill in the mountains with a crowd round the ropes and the reporters' mikes going full-tilt. Brilliant scenery (there are lovely shots of the Sierra) contrasts with cold, dirty killing, every detail is pin-sharp with suspicion as the hero careers towards his bullet. Humphry Bogart makes a perfect Dillinger of the part—watch his shell-shocked gestures and suddenly bared teeth—but it's not one of the gangsters of the heyday. Partly, as I've said, their time is gone; and now, as we look back, a golden streak, somewhat dubiously, is discovered. The parts of *High Sierra* dealing with a crippled girl are out of focus: should have been as sardonically observed as the rest. Against that, Ida Lupino gives us the best moll I have seen, though, here, too, there is a trace too much of sentiment. For those who still feel a *nostalgie de la boue*, this film is well worth a visit.

Tableau: Man and girl discovered kissing. Sensitive intruder to insensitive: "Don't interrupt them, it's the embrace of England and America." No doubt we shall have to put up with a good deal of *entente cordiale* in the future, but I'm sorry it should have started, however light-heartedly, with *One Night in Lisbon*, a film I enjoyed. The final tableau, as a matter of fact, can't be applied rigorously to the whole, or we should be led to suppose that England (too virginal Miss Carroll) has had to be roused out of isolation by America (direct-interventionist MacMurray), a view for which we should need more evidence. The tableau, however, is only chucked in, and its idiocy almost fits the mood of *One Night in Lisbon*—high-spirited with a touch of whimsy. I liked Fred MacMurray's bounderish wooing, Miss Carroll's painful look in love of a patient doing well, John Loder's brilliantly clean, boring English commander, Edmund Gwenn's Whitehall wallah and Dame May Whitty's shocked nurse, the background of wartime London, sand bags, black-out curtains, Soho restaurants, and bumps in the night. The scene shifts in the end to Lisbon and Nazi agents and adjoining bedrooms. Somewhere behind this quick-witted fooling there is a Van Druten play, and perhaps I am wrong in attributing to it the few sticky touches, like memories of a pre-war *éclair*. Director, Edward H. Griffith, and scrip-writer, Virginia Van Upp, seem to have left the original well behind. It's a film, anyway, that pokes fun at English manners. The moral, so far as I can see, is: There's no game like love, and American conventions are best.

The English reticences, joyously rushed in *One Night in Lisbon*, are Mr. Asquith's own country. One might compare the priggish Commander of the American film with the Flight Lieutenant (John Mills) of this one; the latter, though clipped and class-bound, is not a prig. (John Mills, by the way, is a very good actor whom I don't remember seeing before.) True, he turns out afterwards to be something else, but that is the way of thrillers and doesn't affect the genuineness of his Englishry. Alistair Sim for that matter may be an M.I.5-man or spy or from Scotland Yard, with an emphasis all the while on the Scot. The butler is a conundrum, too. Despite such traps, *Cottage to Let* is gaily, exuberantly native. Jeanne de Casalis provides a country lady streaming airily through evacuees, bazaars, impromptu cookery, free association, and a warden's lot; her husband (Leslie Banks) is the English scientist of tradition—office-shy, with an aura of charm and culture. Almost the best of these portraits is Muriel Aked's little Scots busybody: her half-dozen appearances are replete with character. *Cottage to Let* isn't another *Quiet Wedding*, the grace-notes of character make for a rather lackadaisical beginning, and the climax has room for nothing but thrills (very good thrills, too); but still it is a film that could have been made only in English studios, and made only by Anthony Asquith. *Good* acting, where a couple of years ago we should have expected screen fudge. I had almost forgotten to mention one of its chief delights: George Cole as the boy evacuee brought up on Sherlock Holmes. He made a success when *Cottage to Let* appeared as a play, and he repeats it in the film. One complaint: Asquith has changed the play to suit himself, so why keep the situation of the three heroes bound together in an old mill and left so that they can satisfactorily get out? Surely that *cliché* among thrills might be banned from now on.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Close Quarters," at the Apollo

The "characters in order of their appearance" are: Beatrix Lehmann, Karel Stepanek. We know therefore when threatening footsteps sound outside the door (as they do from time to time in this over-tense drama), that they will go away, no third character being allowed on the stage. This is only a detail, and a comparatively unimportant one, but illustrates an inherent weakness of *Close Quarters*: that it is a *tour de force* which loses rather than gains by its convention of austerity. It is artificially restricted to duologue, arbitrarily prolonged to three acts when two would serve. We learn in the course of the evening quite a lot about these two characters, man and wife, and about the murder, with political repercussions, of which first one and then the other appears guilty; but it is less than we learn, for example, about the protagonists of *Miss Julie*. Too long, too high-tensioned, too sparse of human nature and ruled by situation: *Close Quarters* isn't a play one wants to see again. To see it once, is, despite faults, an experience. But the two actors are given a fine opportunity for virtuoso playing. Beatrix Lehmann and a Czech actor, Karel Stepanek, give two performances remarkable in themselves and combining like a sonata for violin and piano. One storms, while the other subsides; a change of theme, and the rôles are reversed. If anything Miss Lehmann gets the better of this nerve-racking struggle, and one can't easily imagine the part being played better.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, August 9th—
- Prof. M. Ginsberg: "National Character," 12 Gt. Newport Street, W.C.2. 2.30.
- Circle of International Art Concert, St. Stephen's Church, Pond Street, N.W.3. 3.
- S.C.R. Week-end School, St. Ermins Hotel, Caxton Street, S.W.1. 4–8. And on Sunday, from 11 onwards. Particulars from Euston 2315.

SUNDAY, August 10th—
- Victoria Kingsley: Chansons from all over the World, 36A Upper Park Road, N.W.3. 6.
- "Distant Point" (by Afinogenov), Unity Theatre. 6.

MONDAY, August 11th—
- "Books and Freedom" Exhibition, Art Gallery, Aberdeen. Till August 23rd.
- The Mercury Theatre Players in "L'Enfant Prodigue," Toynbee Hall Theatre.

TUESDAY, August 12th—
- Recital by Leonard Hirsch (violin), 22 St. Petersburgh Place, W.2. 7.

WEDNESDAY, August 13th—
- M. Bonifas: "La Fontaine," Institut Français. 5.30.

FRIDAY, August 15th—
- Lt. Col. H. Kahle: "Present-Day Strategic Problems," 36A Upper Park Road, N.W.3. 7.
- Count Jan Balinski-Jundzill: "Poland To-day," 12 Gt. Newport Street, W.C.2. 7.
- L. A. G. Strong: "James Joyce," 22 St. Petersburgh Place, W.2. 7.

Correspondence

DISNEY

SIR,—William Whitebait is misinformed. I do NOT think Disney is Rowlandson. I would as soon think of comparing him to Rowlandson as of comparing an airplane to a horse. What I said was that Disney was the most significant figure in graphic art since Leonardo. Not because of his draughtsmanship, but because he is an artist who uses his brains.

I think W.W. has the wrong approach to Disney. Too preoccupied with sound accompaniment and idea content. Put on one side, please, the music and noise. Forget *Mickey Mouse*, *Donald Duck*, etc. Stop talking of "film cartoons." Consider moving drawings.

The first moving drawings made for cinema projection by that old Frenchman (whose name I forget) in 1895 (or was it '97?) were elementary. The drawing was poor. They moved. That was as much as you could say. There followed a procession, mostly of Americans, including Windsor McKay with his delightful but crudely moving "prehistoric animal" *Gertie*; and Bud Fisher who animated his comic-strip characters *Mutt and Jeff*. The movement, improving slowly, was up till then confined to the simplest actions from the easiest angles, in profile mostly, tiresome in repetition. These black-and-white comics were capped about 15 years ago by Pat Sullivan with his *Felix the Cat*. Sullivan was a creative genius, fertile in original tricks of draughtsmanship and novel mechanical devices, which enabled him to advance the whole art-form by a couple of miles or so. Sullivan's animation was not yet subtle, but it was "all-round." His figures moved from all angles—sometimes a bit painfully—and they had the beginnings of perspective and individual character. Then along comes Disney. Pat Sullivan and his predecessors were, so to speak, penny comic. Disney organised the experts and with specialised animators, better draughtsmen, colour, and double the number of drawings per foot, soon pushed the art first to tuppenny comic, and then to threepenny. Now by Gosh! he has made it sixpenny—no, shilling! His last three "features" were each an advance upon the last in technical artistry and extension of range. They reveal a growing understanding of the meaning of observed movement, and therefore greatly increased powers of imagined movement. Compare the changes of human expression in the face of *Snow-white* with that in the faces of the *Centaurettes* in *Fantasia*, and mark the striking improvement. Subtlety is now possible.

Now, here's the point. It was perfectly clear donkeys' years ago that graphic Art (capital A), hit by the mechanical age, needed a new idea. Heaven knows, it hasn't had one since somebody 2,000 years ago thought of painting pictures to frame and hang on the wall as a change from carpets. All the cubes, abstracts and surrealist ironmongery haven't really saved the situation. It was clear also that as the machinery for representing movement improved some intelligent lad would drop to it that the means were present for opening a new and exciting vista of possible Art (capital A). At present your conventional Artist who wishes to represent the beauty and character of a woman or a landscape discovers the emotional elements of shape and colour in the subject, and, following principles of selection and emphasis, puts them down in clarified form. But the woman moves with charm, the trees bend in the breeze. There are emotional elements in the movements to be discovered, selected, emphasised and represented in heightened form, also. Why not?

In *Fantasia* Disney lifts the art of drawing movement right out of the "comic" and essays for the first time serious studies on the higher plane. Walpurgis Night and the prehistoric sequences drive right to the foothills of the New Art of the Future.

Your stick-in-the-muds will scoff, no doubt. But I know what Leonardo would be up to if he were alive to-day. He would be in his back room inventing simplifications of animating processes and projection devices.

DAVID LOW

London, N.W.11.

"WESTERN CIVILISATION"

SIR,—Your comments on Mr. Rowse's review of Mr. Butler's *The Roots of National Socialism* are admirable, but may I add something to what you say.

Apart from the fact that there are other political traditions in Germany besides arrogant nationalism, German nationalism itself is much more complex than the Vansittart-Blimp interpretation suspects. Early German nationalism was closely associated with social progressiveness. It was a protest against the territorial separatism, social reaction, economic backwardness and political impotence of the German states, and was born, as a movement, out of Napoleon's oppression. Herder (its parent) wrote the most bitter attacks on political tyranny and economic imperialism. Hegel and his pupils were highly suspect in the 1820's, and the young liberals of the 1830's were nearly all Hegelians (not to speak of the young Hegel). Friedrich List was invited to become editor of the radical-liberal newspaper which Marx edited, 1842-43. If the early democrats like Varnhagon, Börne, and the rest were also ardent nationalists (it was the liberal democrats who called for a Germany navy in the 1840's) the reason is the same that caused the spread of nationalism in Germany later: the fact that the middle and ruling classes of England and France had created Great Powers ruling and exploiting half the world, and that Germans were left with "the airy realm of dreams." That Britain and France "possess" so much, as imperialist powers, and Germany so little accounts for the arrogant nationalism of the ruling circles in Germany—just as it accounts for the high degree of organisation of German economy and army. It is not something different from western civilisation, but a part of it. In the same way the Marxist "tradition" prospered there because of the resulting tension in economic and political organisation, and in the light of lessons learnt abroad. We have always to remember that, to a German, the fact of the British Empire is more convincing than any British cultural ideals or principles.

One word more: Mr. Rowse's sneer at Thomas Mann is ignorant and ignoble. Explicitly in the early 1920's, and bravely in action, Mann has repudiated the errors of his early nationalism. Mr. Rowse's development seems to reverse Mann's.

17 Rotton Park Road, ROY PASCAL
Birmingham, 16.

P.S.—But Delenda est Carthago!

SIR,—It is like old times to read Mr. Rowse and Mr. Butler. Looking back on a rather long life, I cannot remember a time when our opponents of the moment were not considered as quite different from and inferior to ourselves. *They* would never respond to generosity as we should, they (unlike ourselves) understood force only. There were no snakes in Ireland, I was told, because the Irish themselves were the snakes. The Indians must be "kept under"; it was the only thing they understood. The Boers "skulked behind rocks," instead of coming out to be shot, and were, indeed, in every way despicable. The Germans—well, there words failed one to describe their lowness. Curious; we ourselves are always on the higher plane, always the elect. One might think this attitude rather Nazi, but, of course, that would be wrong. What is sauce for the Nazi is not sauce for the British intellectual. No doubt. I suppose most of your readers have found, as I have, that the intellectuals of every country respond more readily than the common folk to "patriotic" neuroses. Which has long convinced me that we need a real, not a pretending democracy, if we are to achieve a sane international life. HAROLD PICTON

177 Baldock Road,
Letchworth, Herts.

THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

SIR,—Lionel Fielden's excellent article cannot be too strongly endorsed. Since Mr. Amery testifies that "with hardly an exception all those whom" the Viceroy "approached in the first instance . . . responded unhesitatingly," the case is one for almost despair. It was evidently known to be useless to approach any man of representative quality, and has taken nearly two years to bring together groups of consultants which omit every Moderate of fame and first rank (Lady Fairfax called out, when her husband's name was read in the list of King Charles's Judges, "He has too much wit to be present!") Not young India only; middle-aged India is almost entirely outside.

Mr. Amery insists that the issue is communal. Why? The seven Ministries did not resign on the communal issue. They resigned because they distrusted utterly the competence of the Chamberlain Government, had viewed its foreign policy with dismay, and denied our right to thrust India into war. Mr. Amery is shocked because Nehru did not support the Chamberlain Government unquestioningly. Has he forgotten that his own secure place in history is because he was the man who, many months later, in an episode which will be immortal, told that Government that they had lost all claim to any patriotic and thinking person's support?

It is generally believed here that only the Hindu-Muslim quarrel holds India back from Dominion status. We get many radio explanations of the Indian situation, and all speakers agree that this is so. The latest, Mr. Joyce (of London), puts it (July 25th): "India will choose her own Constitution after the war" and enter the "brotherhood" of the Dominions. Four questions must be put on record, though they may not be answered. (1) Are these statements merely dope for the British listener or do they commit us? Since only official apologists can speak on any Indian matter over the wireless, these statements will make trouble in the post-war difficulties that are coming. (2) If we have promised India her own Constitution, does this mean we shall accept one that contains details we may dislike? (3) Who will choose this Constitution—a body that contains representatives of the major (as well as the minute) groups or a hand-picked selection of princes and notables? (4) Must there be 100 per cent. agreement? Or will Government accept a Constitution which not more than (shall we say?) 10 per cent. of the delegates want to veto? Will a 90 per cent. agreement be good enough?

One last point. Mr. Amery continually deplores the fact that, unlike our own political parties, Congress puts party before the state, and showed this when they formed Ministries from their own supporters, Muslim and other, after winning the 1937 elections. Congress acted within their rights and exactly as they thought they were intended to act. When has any British political party won an election and then invited its defeated opponents to sit in its Cabinets? Secondly, when the Congress Working Committee pulled out its Ministries this was Fascism and Totalitarianism. In what way, again, did it differ from British practice? I will not go into the question of trade union influence on Labour political action, but refer only to a celebrated meeting at the Carlton Club (October 19th, 1922), when the Chief Whip "brought the party together with a snap" and the meeting, by what Lord Birkenhead styled "an act of monumental folly and ingratitude," pulled Conservative Ministers out of the Cabinet. I think you will find that Congress leaders have acted remarkably as our own leaders act, with the added consciousness that they are striving desperately to make an Indian nation and to leave it free, whereas we have long ago won our freedom. India's ablest and most representative men are most of them in the Viceroy's gaols, not in his Council or Consultative Group.

Oxford. EDWARD THOMPSON

THE VILLAGE EGG

SIR,—Your article "The Village Egg" so exactly describes the general conditions and the egg situation in this small hamlet in Dorset that I felt it might have been written by an inhabitant. The only difference is that after waiting four weeks for our rationed eggs we were sent sufficient only for one egg (Canadian) per registered person.

Another side of the egg muddle is the matter of collection and distribution.

My next door neighbour and my opposite neighbour are both large poultry farmers and egg producers. One has his eggs collected by a dealer in Hampshire, the other, who is also our retailer of rationed eggs, has her eggs collected by a dealer in a town in Dorset, but her supply of rationed eggs must be supplied to her from a distributing centre in still another town in Dorset.

And there is much talk about economy of transport. A. READER

INDIAN BROADCASTING

SIR,—May I remove a misunderstanding? There are two programmes given specially for India by the B.B.C. One is in English, conducted in London by an Indian; the other is in Hindustani, conducted at another B.B.C. centre by a distinguished (English) civil servant of long experience (as a Revenue Commissioner, I believe) to whom Sir Stephen Tallents refers. They are separate entities. Your article, about which I wrote, was concerned with processes of translation and its control, and had, I think, no bearing on the *English* service, which has very rightly been praised by Mr. Desmond Hawkins, Mr. E. M. Forster, and Sir Stephen Tallents himself. My target—and, as I understood it, yours—was quite different. I only now repeat what I believe to be true, namely, that the hurried translation and subsequent "checking for accuracy" of a bulletin couched in English thought and journalistic idiom, cannot, especially where Oriental languages are concerned, produce successful propaganda. And I still venture to doubt whether it is a good plan to check every translation "for accuracy" instead of according trust and responsibility to translators.

Sir Stephen Tallents' letter opens with an ominous assurance of regard, and proceeds to a Panzer attack, in which I am insulting, foolish, yet more mischievous, out-of-date, and everything which Sir Stephen would naturally like readers to think me. It would be the greatest fun to start a little guerilla warfare of my own, because I think Sir Stephen's tanks are mostly cardboard, and I most immodestly hold that I know quite as much about both broadcasting and India as he does. But it is really beside the original point and would bore your readers. I would only like to comment that, if Sir Stephen really read into my letters something which moved him to "protect colleagues less able to speak for themselves"—the "distinguished public servant of long experience requires no defence"—I can assure him that I attacked nothing except B.B.C. policy, about which he seems able to speak quite a lot. LIONEL FIELDEN

55 Park Lane.

SIR,—When I first opened a copy of my old favourite, THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, the other day after nearly three months I did not know I would have to write to you in reply to what I would call a very unjust criticism of the Hindustani section of the B.B.C. by Mr. Fielden.

I have just arrived from India, and I can claim to have a first-hand knowledge of what the listeners in my country think of the overseas broadcasts. The Indian henchman of Goebbels, whose style Mr. Fielden characterises as "racy," is considered by an average listener in India as nothing but cheap propaganda stunt.

The Indian listener to-day wants news, just as it is without any superfluous sugar-coating, in simple, plain, lucid, sober and dignified language, and that is exactly what he gets from the Hindustani service of the B.B.C. I still remember how people in a metropolis like Bombay and a small town like Dehra Dun eagerly wait to hear the announcer begin his bulletin with that simple and yet very attractive "London salutes India."

T. M. PANDE, Sub-Editor
The Sunday Standard, Bombay (India).

SIR,—Indulging in the sin of complacency is apparently pardonable in certain quarters—hence Sir Stephen Tallents' letter in your issue of August 2nd becomes comprehensible. Sir Stephen writes that the German broadcast service to India is now largely discredited. Even if his evidence proves to be convincing to the B.B.C. authorities (though about this I have my own doubts), may I know if this alleged debunking of German broadcasts has been brought about by the B.B.C. news-bulletins to India?

Sir Stephen's defence of his staff is easy to understand, and the meed of praise from Mr. Desmond Hawkins and Mr. E. M. Forster is most welcome. But what is impossible for many of my compatriots to make out is the absolute lack of comprehension of the Indian mentality by those responsible for the B.B.C. news-bulletins for India. I have nothing but praise for the interesting series of literary talks recently broadcast to India. Unfortunately, it cannot whitewash the many shortcomings of the bulletins in question. The B.B.C. considered it worth while to let India hear about Ethel M. Dell's demise, and at the same time forgot all about certain very significant recent publications, suitable comments on which would have made my compatriots—and many others, too—jump. As Sir Stephen has got a most brilliant staff at his disposal it is not necessary for me to enumerate these publications.

Finally, it is most gratifying to learn that the shortcomings of the B.B.C. news-bulletins to India are not due to parsimony nor due to any lack of potential capacity on the part of the B.B.C. staff. Best thanks to Sir Stephen Tallents for this assurance. INDIAN RESIDENT

SIR,—My recent letter on the subject of Indian broadcasting is unhappily open to a misunderstanding which I had not foreseen. You are aware, of course, that radio transmissions to India are divided into two parts—those in the English language and those in Indian. I ought to make it clear that my defence of recent literary talks to India applies only to the programmes transmitted in English. If your criticism was intended to refer to the programmes transmitted in Indian, my reply was irrelevant, as I know nothing of this service. I was only concerned to show that the English-speaking programmes to India have, in my view, a vitality which some other departments might well imitate.

Martins Green, DESMOND HAWKINS
Berden, Bishop's Stortford.

FEDERAL UNION

SIR,—The reviewer of Streit's new book *Union Now with Britain* has over-stated the case against Federal Union. She writes: "The case for democracy is quite empty; it is surely obvious that a government formed from a legislature each of whose representatives was elected by 5,000,000 people, would be oligarchic and completely out of reach of public opinion. . . . Surely it is as plain as mud that Federal Union . . . would certainly enthrone Roosevelt for life as its chief executive with terrific power!"

In the first place, it is as well to remember that Mr. Streit's conception is not the only one, and that there are a good many proposals of how a federal legislature might be elected, including forms of indirect election. But having said that, it is admitted that constituencies are likely to be very large and that therefore public control would be difficult to enforce. Difficult, perhaps, but certainly not impossible.

Miss White's suggestion that the chief executive of a Federal Union must be some sort of a dictator overlooks the essential fact in federalism, which is that there is a division of powers between state governments and the supra-state government, so that before a federal dictator can arise, both individual and state rights must be abolished. If Miss White is to make her case she must assert that Roosevelt is already a dictator, since he is already the chief executive of a Federal Union. That he has great powers nobody denies. Few, however, would deny that he is answerable to public opinion—especially those who believe that they understand his aspirations and are yet forced to contemplate how far short of these is his present policy.

Clearly Miss White has not thought about the subject very much, but to those who have thought about the organisation of international affairs federalism does appear as the only practical proposal so far put forward which is consistent with democracy. Most people would agree that a return to secret diplomacy and power politics after this war would be disastrous, and that instead some form of organisation across frontiers is necessary. The question is what kind of organisation. There is the kind this country attempted with France in the early months of this war—a joint "Cabinet" answerable to two legislatures separately elected, and served by a number of secret committees, and there is the kind of "mix-up" with which we are experimenting in our relations with the United States at the present time. Both suffer fatally from the fact that there is no central authority with power; both are dependent on the readiness of the heads of government to make their policies conform. This may be all very well for two nations on the same side in a crisis, but as a means of organising the common affairs of several nations with divergent policies, it is obviously inadequate and certainly not democratic. The shortcomings of the French arrangements were made evident by history; those of the American arrangements would be made evident if a less well disposed President were in power.

The federal proposal is that instead of this ramshackle organisation across frontiers there should be government across frontiers, and that the government should have powers in its own right, defined and limited in a constitution. Such a government would have to be elected by the peoples of the different nations for whom it was legislating (as I have said there are a number of proposals of how this might be arranged). In this way democratic procedure would have its opportunity.

Possibly, however, Miss White was carried away by her antagonism to Streit's particular federal proposal, and failed to see that federalism applies elsewhere—not least in Europe. C. D. KIMBER
Editor, *Federal Union News*.

ALIEN DOCTORS

SIR,—For several months now the case for allied and alien doctors living in this country has been discussed in the medical press and newspapers. It is openly admitted that there is an urgent need for qualified medical men in the bombed areas and among the military and naval services. There was an appeal for a thousand doctors to volunteer from the United States. Yet here, in Britain, are hundreds of allied and alien doctors, driven from their countries for political or racial reasons, or serving here with the allied armed forces, who, although longing to get back to their profession, are for one reason or another not being used. There can be no question of competition between British and foreign doctors, because obviously after the war the latter will be anxious to return to their own countries where the need for them will be enormous owing to the destructive health policy of the oppressors.

Britain needs additional doctors for the duration of the war. There are men who can and want to do the job. Why not give them a chance? They are anxious not only to earn a decent living for themselves but also as far as possible to help the cause of Democracy, which is of necessity their cause also.

I should like to call your attention particularly to the question of Polish doctors who came here after the French armistice and who are nearly all serving in the Polish forces. Many of them are young doctors who went through a modern medical education and who have experience both in civil and military services. They number several hundreds. Now within the limits of the Polish army there is work only for a quarter of them. The greater number, who are longing to keep their cause within their own particular sphere, are forced to remain almost completely idle. The policy of their military medical authorities seems curiously inconsistent. For example: some weeks ago—probably at the request of the British medical authorities—they issued a call for volunteers to serve in British medical institutions, and particularly in the bombed areas, the Navy and the Merchant Service, thus admitting that there are vacancies in these spheres.

Nearly half of the Polish doctors immediately responded to this appeal. They got no word that anything was being done about transferring them. After making repeated inquiries they were told unofficially that the matter was closed, as there were no vacancies for allied doctors. At the same time there are well-founded rumours that the *Polish medical authorities gave out that there were no volunteers for these jobs.*

It would seem vital that the facts be disclosed. Surely someone competent should investigate and either prove or disprove these rumours, stating openly what obstacles there are in the way of the profitable use of these young, qualified, and energetic doctors who want to do their best for the cause of the Democracies. A POLISH DOCTOR

"DOCTORING AFTER THE WAR"

SIR,—The article by Dr. Roberts in the current issue of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION is interesting, but disappoints in so much as it ignores one aspect of reform in medical service which is as much, if not of more, importance to the patient. I refer of course to the worst defects in the organisation of the profession itself. For the sake of brevity I will list these.

(2) The B.M.A. permits any qualified doctor to set up a self-styled "Specialist" just as soon as he can afford the cost of a "Harley Street" consulting room and with little other restriction. It follows that in some cases this is when the newly qualified doctor leaves his medical school—a stage incidentally at which he is only just beginning to become a doctor or surgeon, and when he cannot have the slightest claim to "specialist" knowledge of any disease or group of diseases. Indeed, the exalted opinion which he obviously has of himself, stamps him straight away as one temperamentally unsuited to the art (as opposed to the science) of healing.

It should not be possible in any reformed medical system for a medical practitioner to designate himself as "specialist" until he has satisfied the competent authorities that he has been a minimum number of years in practice and can provide evidence of research in a specified disease group—has in brief an indubitable right to be regarded as an authority on the subject. I venture to suggest that if such a test were applied to-day to all those who profess and call themselves "Specialists" not all would survive the purge and Harley Street rents would suffer a sudden slump.

(2) The B.M.A. permits a newly qualified medico to start up in practice on his own if he can afford to buy a practice. Here again it should not be possible for a doctor to do this until he has served for at least three years as assistant to an established practitioner during which period he should also remain attached to a hospital. Only then will he be able to claim some experience in the art and science of healing.

(3) The B.M.A. has allowed the Panel medical service (as it at present operates) to produce an inferior type of medical practitioner. Usually over-worked and with insufficient cash returns for his labours, this type of doctor makes no attempt to keep abreast of modern practice, but relies on the fact that the majority of his patients are of the working class, medically ignorant and therefore ready to pin their faith to the bismuth, liquorice and rhubarb mixtures which he is equally ready to prescribe.

Everyone knows that in these three groups, Specialist, General private Practitioner and Panel Doctor, the majority of practitioners still fully earn the confidence of the public. But a system which allows the less conscientious a place, is a system in need of reform. NORAH M. JEANS

CHEERING UP MR. WOOLF

SIR,—In his review of my book, *The Recovery of the West*, Mr. Woolf ascribes to me a number of views on "authority" which are certainly not mine; his fourth paragraph, and the middle of his fifth, which he presents as his own comment on my book, are virtually quotations of my own criticisms of views which I say plainly I do not hold. He goes on to say that words like "obviously" sometimes creep into his writings (and that the sentences in which they occur are probably untrue), and he ends by illogically assuming that I write my prose in the same surrealistic manner. I can assure him that I do not. I use a word like "obviously" as a gesture of politeness to my readers when stating a fact that will be familiar to many of them but which they might not spontaneously recall in that context. The trouble seems to be that I am dealing with unpleasant facts (such as the birth-rate in Oslo, which for some years has been just half of that needed to maintain a steady population) which Mr. Woolf thinks it would be nicer to ignore, and therefore stigmatises as half-truths.

A more important point is his statement that he finds the history of the period from 1750 to 1880 (which he calls "Christian," but which might equally be called the age of Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité) "scarcely encouraging." If that period, with its immense scientific discoveries, its improvement in the standard of social conduct, its unprecedented rise in the material standard of living, and its remarkable expansion of population, is not "encouraging" to Mr. Woolf, I can't think that any period ever has been or ever will be. The fact that we have made some improvements on the past and can still see others that need to be made is no reason for becoming depressed or for belittling the achievements of our ancestors. The instance proves nothing much about Christianity one way or the other, but Mr. Woolf's fallacy is at once so simple and so widespread that perhaps you will forgive me for drawing attention to it.

Penrith. MICHAEL ROBERTS

P.S.—On one point Mr. Woolf is almost right. I am indeed a pupil of Samuel Smiles. I studied under him at King's College, London; but it was the grandson, the well-known chemist, not the biographer.

[Mr. Leonard Woolf writes: "A characteristic letter from an author who has just read a critical review of his book. I read Mr. Roberts's book with the greatest care and I claim to be a person of average intelligence. Every opinion which I ascribed to him appears in the book to be held by him. If he cannot make himself intelligible to a person of average intelligence, that fault is his. Apparently he did not mean what he said; he should now, with the help of my criticism, try again in another book to say what he means. As regards his other points: (1) There are no facts which I think it 'nice' or 'nicer' to ignore; (2) the years 1750 to 1880 which were Christian appear to me less encouraging than the years 1880 to 1914 which were not so Christian."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

OF all great novelists George Meredith has remained longest under the weather. Unread by the many, sneered at by the few who ought to know better, his books accumulate dust. Mention of his name in instructed company, any time since the last war, has produced an instant reaction of hatred and disgust. The alleged reason for this is always the style—a style in fact much less rebarbative than many admired by those who sneer. The very English preference for nonchalance in art, as in social intercourse, may well have its share in the general detestation of Meredith's novels; but the deeper reason was that, in the age of Proust and Joyce, his view of life had become exceedingly unfashionable. Now, with the change in the intellectual climate brought about by stresses as peculiar as they are inescapable, to present generations Meredith's instrument should have the fresh power of a blade protected from rust by the very depth at which it has been buried. For this is the time, if ever, to throw off the debilitating pessimism which has brought us to the present pass, and to assume again that belief in the self-renovating power of the soul which was the foundation of Meredith's muscular agnosticism. The rise of Industrialism, "Progress," Darwinism (1859 saw the issue both of the *Origin of Species* and of *Feverel*) and the decline of Christian belief, had brought the men and women of Meredith's day to a stage at which a readjustment of the interacting rhythm of thought and action was taking place everywhere. It is the same to-day. The type of sensibility of which Proust is the extreme example, and which has influenced deeply numbers of people who never heard of that writer, is no longer *de mise*. For the majority of intelligent, vital men and women the piecemeal, dissociative method of conjugating the mind in action—the blade of thought ever and anon tarnished by the sour breath of an inconstant will—has ceased to be valid, either in life or in art. Man and the present have got to be integrated, and if the result be an immediate diminution of true sensibility, it will be one of the tasks of the New Liberalism, to which we look forward as an outcome of the victory of the Anglo-Saxon world, to build this back into the progressive fabric of civilisation. "The complaining millions," wrote Matthew Arnold to his friend Arthur Hugh Clough, some years before Meredith published his first novel, "want something to *animate* and *ennoble* them—not merely to add zest to their melancholy or grace to their dreams." That is as true of a people emerging from the nineteen-twenties and thirties as it was of a generation steeped in the poetry of a previous romantic period.

"I have never started on a novel to pursue the idea it developed. The dominant idea in my mind took up the characters and the story midway," wrote Meredith in 1887—long after he had shown clearly that he belonged to that rare type of artist in whom the creative and judging faculties run in harness. One of the advantages enjoyed by those who have made their own way in life is that the struggle encourages an inductive method in the forming of principles. Thus it is with Meredith's characters, who obey his dramatic vision by living in action, all the time. Richard Feverel, Evan Harrington, Harry Richmond, Beauchamp and Romfrey, Diana, Clara Middleton, Fleetwood: all use their high intelligences in order that acts should continually proceed from the conclusions drawn. There are no Hamlets here; these men and women act globally—with the whole of their being—and waste no time in vain regrets. "To know when a thing hath perished, or is vital, is one of the tests of wisdom," Meredith observed to Frederick Maxse, his best friend and the "original" of Beauchamp; and because these beautiful and healthy people (Meredith is never in the least afraid of making a hero or heroine look the part) know this, they have the advantage, immensely important to the reader, that they *grow* throughout the histories they precipitate. Feverel emerges from his sentimental education a man of considerably stiffer fibre than Flaubert's Frédéric Moreau; but the effect of disillusionment is not less poignant because the final impression is not merely sad. For Beauchamp and Richmond the ordeal is different: both are successful amateurs—the kind of men Meredith evidently most admired, just as he preferred village cricket to Lords, and indeed any splendid improvisation to the more finished and cautious behaviour of a professional. Diana Merion's reckless vitality and confidence encompass the ruin of her love; but the end of the novel does not find her sitting amid the ashes. Abominably treated by a self-indulgent father and a vain, deceptive lover, Clara Middleton never loses the sense of her own integrity and what the loss of it would entail; the whole ironic excitement, for us, of her situation lies in the spectacle she presents as, secured in oilskins and sou'wester, her hands on the tiller, she steers her course through the tempest of reinforced egotism that assails her. Loss of innocence was a theme as fascinating to Meredith as it must be to all novelists, just because it is among the richest of spiritual dramas; he handles it again and again; but its most dramatic expression, in his last completed novel, *The Amazing Marriage*, shows the victim, Carinthia Jane, by no means unequal to the humiliations she is called upon to endure at the hands of her Byronic husband. Like all Meredith's characters, both he and she are profoundly changed by their struggle with each other; but the interest for us of their final scene (one of the best things Meredith ever wrote) lies just in Carinthia's perception that for her part it was too late to forgive: life had gone on . . . So it is for all, and that is why a reading of these novels makes so stimulating an impression of the victory of character over sensibility. "I cannot play at life," exclaimed Meredith, on the occasion of his second marriage; and when one considers that it was this marriage which was to release his finest novels—*Harry Richmond*, *Beauchamp's Career*, *The Egoist*—in quick succession, it is hardly surprising that his fundamental criticism of "bad" characters, such as Willoughby Patterne and Lord Fleetwood, is exactly that they do "play at life"—as the heroes and heroines of the latter-day novel have scarcely yet ceased to do. For Feverel—for the young Meredith, as for the young people of 1925—life's answer to the enthusiastic soul was dusty; Harry Richmond, Romfrey, Beauchamp riposte by asking it another kind of question—and the answer, this time, is a glorious affirmative.

At the top of such a triumph it is possible to ask anything of human beings, and one of the most individual features of the Meredith novel is the physical and spiritual endurance which these wonderful creatures require of themselves and of each other. Only a Meredith heroine could say, as Carinthia Jane says: "I hate sleep: I hate anything that robs me of my will." The sheer preposterousness of hating sleep, added to one's complete acceptance of the remark in its context, guarantees the stature of the writer's imagination. And the same strong mind, served by a powerful physique, is seen at work in the remark, made by Meredith's last hero but implicit in the behaviour of his first, that "the blow forgives." This quasi-mediaeval sentiment, which was strong throughout the nineteenth century and produced the best and worst of its attitudes, fits naturally into Meredith's preference (shared by Henry James) for the high milieu and the formal preoccupations which go with it. It helps also to explain his women—another source of irritation to modern readers, for whom only the latest form of wit is endurable. To a less prejudiced mind, I cannot help thinking that Diana of the Crossways, with her glance at Caroline Norton and the first Mrs. Meredith (*née* Peacock, you will remember), conforms remarkably to Lord Houghton's account of the famous Harriet, Lady Ashburton, in whom he found "the fullest and freest exercise of an intellectual gaiety, that presented the most agreeable and amusing pictures in few and varied words; making high comedy out of daily life, and relieving sound sense and serious observation with imaginative contrasts and delicate surprises." This might be Devonshire House during the Regency; but the view that feminine wit died in English society with the accession of Queen Victoria will not bear examination. Diana's talk is much better than is usually allowed; she and Clara Middleton are the mothers of Isabel Archer and Madame de Mauves. There is no question, it seems, of Meredith's having influenced Henry James; but a similar process of intuition, which analyses character without disintegrating it, and a similar perception of what constitutes fineness of conscience, unite the two men at what is after all a most important point. The comparison must not be pushed further, for Meredith's perceptions, though always necessarily of a poetical order, were entirely unaesthetic. His attempt to portray an artist (R. L. Stevenson, incidentally) in the Woodseer of *The Amazing Marriage* is as conventional as *Punch*, and he everywhere shows that the aesthetic approach to life, with its emphasis on contemplation and its habit of collecting sensations like bibelots, was a closed book to a man for whom experience was but an instrument for keeping an edge on the character.

All this of course took time to develop; his poetry supplies a running commentary; and to prefer—as many profess to do—*Feverel*, or the Italian novels, or *Rhoda Fleming*, or even *Evan Harrington*, to the novels of Meredith's maturity, seems to me criminally lazy. No one would deny the lyrical beauty and youthfulness of *Feverel*; but its ineptitudes are many and excruciating, and the scene of Richard's seduction by Bella Mount is surely one of the worst pieces of ridiculous bathos ever invented by a great novelist (Balzac will supply parallels). No wonder it made the author's friend, Augustus Jessopp, "ill for twenty-four hours"!

Harry Richmond and *Beauchamp's Career* have Shakespearian proportions, vigour, pathos and excitement; but it is with *The Egoist* that we reach the real centre of Meredith's life and work. In this consummately clever study in the anatomy of sentimentality we get at last the full revelation of the well-hidden strands that wove the stuff of this very rare mind. Behind the general view of relationships stand Peacock, Spenser and Ariosto; behind the staccato dialogue, with its perpetual ellipses, its legalistic quips, its outbursts of comic grandiloquence, stands the drama of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, and the novels of Jean-Paul; behind the essentially dramatic construction, the exquisite irony, the brilliant exposition of character, stand—here is the clue—La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère, and the tragi-comedies of Molière and Regnard. The result is one of the most deeply *French* books ever written in English; and to imagine what Trollope, say, would have done with such a theme is to comprehend the distinction between genius and talent.

Each of Meredith's novels is a *tour de force*; but after *The Egoist* he was apt to turn aside into nasty thickets. *The Tragic Comedians*, *One of Our Conquerors* and *Lord Ormont and his Aminta* are parodies of their author's worst faults: heavy-footed, facetious, involved, pompous and romantical, they are written in a wildly

debased Gothic which renders them unreadable to-day. It was his early passion for the Arabian Nights returning *mal à propos*. Then, miraculously, Meredith threw off these grotesqueries and gave the world, in *The Amazing Marriage*, such a novel as Browning might have written, had he chosen to cast *The Ring and the Book* in prose. All Meredith's finest qualities are here embodied in a style the clarity of which is not disturbed by the characteristic coruscations of images. (The book contains some wonderful impressionistic writing: I would undertake to palm off the description of the prize-fight as a paragraph from *Ulysses*.) And the theme of *The Egoist*, so near to the author's heart, is here explored again, in its more tragic implications.

Meredith is the most isolated of novelists. Unlike his contemporaries, he preferred the unicellular scheme, eschewing the sub-plot so typical of nineteenth century English fiction. The French and German elements in his education had given him a peculiar kind of social and artistic conscience which made him unpopular with his countrymen in his own day, but ought to alienate them no longer. Henry James complained that he could never leave his subject alone; "but," he added, "he did the best things best." EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

ECONOMIC HISTORY

The Cambridge Economic History of Europe. Edited by J. H. CLAPHAM and EILEEN POWER. Vol. I. The Agrarian Life of the Middle Ages. *Cambridge University Press.* 30s.

The inauguration of a new Cambridge History, always a notable happening, is doubly welcome at the present moment. It will be, to students of history at least, a major event of the spring publishing season; economic history, the latest *débutante* of Clio's daughters, admitted thus to the elect company of her elder sisters, may now give her story and her findings to the widest public.

In the normal course of events the opening of a new series calls for a welcome only. Here, however, as a reviewer scans the title-page and list of contents, he will find it hard to leave unsaid a *vale* also. Not only is he reminded of the loss of the younger of the two editors, to whom her colleague, the *doyen* of English economic historians, refers with deep feeling, but he also finds assembled a company of scholars whom world events have since separated beyond all present hope of reunion—have even scattered into battle, durance and exile—while the Europe they describe, a Europe of sister nations rooted in a common past and following parallel paths, has slipped her moorings and fallen away with the tide into the mist, beyond sight and hailing.

This volume is concerned exclusively with the land and its cultivation from the earliest historical times to the break-up of the Middle Ages. It is a history of agrarian Europe, and the editors, who have combined an excellent judgment with a breadth of sympathy surely peculiar to this country, desired that every phase and each region should be treated by a scholar nurtured in the traditions of the land most nearly concerned. This wish, which seemed at one time to be on the point of realisation, was in part frustrated by revolution and war, but enough remains to make this a work of co-operative international scholarship such as will not be seen again for more years than one cares to forecast.

Co-operative histories to which each writer contributes a chapter almost inevitably suffer from a certain lack of freshness. One long familiar with his subject and conscious that he is re-telling an old story is apt to be fearful alike of naive enthusiasm and flashy originality, and to adopt a dry, encyclopedic treatment. In this respect the contributors to an economic history are fortunate. They have a theme which is not hackneyed or outworn, and have generally the definite findings of their own researches to make public. Consequently, the present volume is both more readable and more stimulating than all but a very few of the previous Cambridge Histories. It may be added that, although only a tenth of the whole is the work of scholars to whom English is their mother tongue, the pages show few traces of this. We are nowhere told how much is translation, and by whom, but those responsible, whoever they may be, have accomplished a notable work.

Perhaps the most powerful impression gained from these chapters is that of an almost identical form of social and economic life evolving over practically the whole of Europe from diverse origins and under racial and climatic conditions the most diverse. This life was that of the members of a village community, occupied in agricultural and rural labour partly for their own benefit and partly for that of their "lord," on land which was to a greater or less degree held by the peasant as his property or enjoyed in common by the community, save for the demesne of the lord, which was cultivated, in part at least, by the unpaid obligatory work of the peasants. The unit of this life was what French writers call the *seigneurie*, and English the "manor"—that cell of economic administration, that strange complex of intermingled field, fallow and common which was to a large degree economically self-contained and self-sufficient, though its size and compactness might vary indefinitely and though it might be a single *bloc* or parcelled with others in the same village.

This manorial life, the constituent of "medieval" society, evolved, as if by a natural growth, from elements as disparate as the highly articulated slave economy of Rome and the nomad or tribal life of Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. Even the bureaucratic Byzantine Empire arrived by a process of devolution at a state of things which could be taken over almost unchanged by the conquering Western barons in 1204. Upon this basis rested the social and political institution—equally universal and equally characteristic of the age—known as feudalism. It is scarcely too much to say that the whole of central medieval history, intellectual and religious life apart, is that of the evolution and influence of manorial life and the feudal system, and that the supreme task of the historian of this period is to discover and explain the origin of the manor and of the feudal bond.

It is for this reason that the reader turns eagerly to the first and sixth chapters. The former is a weighty and densely packed account, by Professor Kroebner, late of Breslau, of the settlement of Europe from the age of the Flavians onwards and the later colonisation of waste, forest and marsh, together with a description of the types of village and agrarian life that developed. It is a remarkable exhibition of detailed yet digested knowledge, and of pondered thought. The latter is the work of Professor Marc Bloch, whose mature scholarship, in the years immediately before the war, was putting forth such varied and abundant flower and fruit; it is a long and brilliant essay on the evolution of the *seigneurie*. M. Bloch holds that the system sprang from the domination, in "barbarian" times, of a family or tribal chief over his local community. This was in part absorbed by the Roman economy of great demesnes, with slaves and dependants; slavery, for a variety of reasons, most of which were economic, declined even before the end of the Empire, but the need for protection impelled all small men to enter into some kind of relation with the territorial lord. Hence the manor and the transition to feudalism. This exposition is accomplished with all the qualities of lucidity and order that are characteristic of the best French thought. It is for experts to say where certainty gives way to brilliant hypothesis; one who is no expert may be allowed to feel that M. Bloch has confined his attention too exclusively to Gaul—the land of great *villae*—and that some agency still more universal than the power of Rome was at work.

The second half of the book is taken up by a series of regional studies. Almost all these are the work of scholars native to the country described, and the level of the essays, many of which break ground entirely unfamiliar to English readers, is very high. Perhaps the least satisfying are precisely those of the "substitutes" who replaced the members of the original team who became casualties of the European crisis; it is unfortunate that Italy should thus have fallen to a student from the distant North, for Italy stood outside the

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classical seigneurial and feudal framework; it had, besides, a peculiar economic and social life of great significance which was to be a powerful influence beyond the Alps. As some compensation, there is an excellent and lucid chapter on Byzantine conditions, the pages of which are adorned with samples of the beautiful New Hellenic Greek type of the Cambridge Press.

England, it must be said with some regret, has made no great demand for *Lebensraum*. The only chapter (and that a short one) by an English writer in this Cambridge History comes from Oxford; two more are by Americans, of which that by Professor Nelly Neilson deals directly with England. She does indeed make good use of her own research and that of others to give a vivid picture of the varied English rural conditions in the later medieval centuries, but of origins and systems there is scarcely a word. Certainly the approach to the English manor is lavishly beset with gins and pitfalls, but a volume such as this might have supplied a unique opportunity to an independent scholar such as Professor Postan for an interim report, if not a final judgment, on the problems mooted by Maitland and Vinogradoff. Actually, nothing of the kind is attempted, and a reader may absorb the whole volume without obtaining any picture of English conditions prior to the Conquest, and without getting an inkling of the controversies, not yet decided, on the origin of the hide, on the precise nature and extent of the various field-systems, and on the evolution of the English village, the English manor, and villeinage. Nor is there any account of the peculiar institutions of Ireland and the Celtic parts of Wales and Scotland.

This volume, as has been said, gives the echo of a voice from beyond the grave. In its pages French, Belgian, German, Finnish, Polish, Swedish and Russian scholars speak calmly of national migrations and peaceful village life in countries now smitten, scarred, tortured or obliterated. It has, therefore, a sadness not inherent in its design. It has also a beauty of its own. Before the reader's mind, as he passes from section to section, there grows a vision of quiet field and forest, of sown land, of woodland verdure, of wild fruit blossom and reddening apples, of ploughland, standing grass and harvest. He sees a village and its strip-fields, the smoke of burning weeds, the stream with its reed-beds, the common and the heath, the crowning fringe of oak and beech. Is it in Hereford or Kent, or in the steeper valleys of Bavaria or Savoy? Or is it a whiter, sun-bathed cluster of houses in Burgundy or Provence? Wherever it be, it is a familiar, unforgotten corner of a Europe which we "have loved long since, and lost awhile."

DAVID KNOWLES

THE LAST CAPEK

The Cheat. By KAREL CAPEK. *Allen and Unwin.* 7s. 6d.

I have always had two sensations after reading a book of Capek's or seeing one of his plays: first, that something was missing; they had not quite come off and had faded like ghosts. Secondly, that this impression was false; what they really left one with was not a sense of failure but of loss. *Our* loss, not his. Borne on by the main stream, Western European culture was making heavy weather and we looked back upon little islands still in view, but hopelessly out of our reach—the small nationalist movements of the last generation which preserved a pure, naive and local poetry gone from us for good. Partly it was that we were seeing the last of the peasant, the last of a provinciality, circumscribed but strangely vital. From the august complexities of the large we looked upon the child-like singularity of the small. In the literature of the small countries tradition was still a friend—think of the return to tradition and the past in Irish and Catalonian culture—where with us, ten to one, it was a commercial fraud. Sentiment, humour without gall, tenderness, affection, wonder, fantasy, a feeling for story, the essential tolerance which seems to pervade even an intensely rabid local life: these qualities of Capek's were common to the literature of the small countries, but had become so debased in our own that they were not often found in any of our best writers of the period. Compare Barrie, for example, with Capek, and one sees the kind of gulf that existed. The provinciality of local European literatures was an amber that exquisitely preserved its fly.

And to their native quality, those literatures occasionally rose to a tentative but often devastating comment on the greater cultures. It is a great advantage to a writer to work within strict limits providing the quality of life is intense within them; so much that is irrelevant never comes near enough to distract. It must have been for this reason that Capek was able, almost spritishly, to impose the word "robot" on Europe and to carry over the world so slight a thing as *The Insect Play*. Those two works, and his later novel *The First Rescue Party*, have a European standing. I do not think that English literature of the mines, which has lately been considerable, approaches the quality of that particular novel.

Of course, one may be deceived here by Capek's pure originality. He does manage to bounce you into the belief that he is writing about something which has never been seen or written about before. One may be mistaking freshness of eye for strength of mind. If so, the answer must be that, whether as travelling journalist, novelist or playwright, Capek could tread the most well-trodden ground, without drawing on the huge tradition of the banal.

The Cheat is an unfinished and posthumous novel and illustrates the feckless variety of Capek's interests. It is not seriously unfinished, not enough to infuriate the reader, and Madame Capek, who knew her husband's intention, has skilfully sketched in a concluding chapter. This time the subject is the always engaging one of the fake artist. Beda Foltyn is an amateur of music with romantic notions about the life and prestige of artists, and we see his life story from the point of view of a number of people who know him from his schooldays to his death. Foltyn dressed the part of his youth, let his hair go long, dimmed the lights of his room, half-closed his eyes and groaned ecstatically as he thumped out a few simple chords on the piano; but fairly early he must have discovered that he had no capacity as a composer. Very soon he found a rich wife on whom he lived and set up as the dandy, patron and connoisseur who takes up young musicians in a princely way. There was method in this vanity; he was stealing bits of their work and trying to patch it all together into a ludicrous opera called *Judith*, which, he told everyone, was his life work. Foltyn was a cheat and thief, one of those *poseurs* who buzz around every false theory of art like flies on cake. He was—one is not surprised to hear—eloquent on the subject of art and eroticism and self-expression. He was always tortured (he said) by the agony of striving to express his soul which only an artist could know. In short, he was the complete bogus artist as distributed by Hollywood to the cinemas. He gives Capek an opportunity of defining the artist's business in life, in a very remarkable passage at the end of the story in which he compares the artist to the God of *Genesis*, who found the earth without form and void and gave it its form and outline. The Devil in art is the personal, the idle pourer-out of the self.

Capek's own achievement springs from such a detachment from himself—though he is a writer with an unmistakable personal accent. *The*

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Cheat is not a work of much range and Foltyn is too feeble to hold up a very serious structure; but the second chapter in which a young girl describes her halting, silly, capricious love affair with Foltyn, is a masterpiece of character-drawing. Capek always astonishes us by his intuitions of reality, which go so lightly into the heart that one is inclined to pass them by as merely charming. They are a good deal more than that:

> Oh, Lord! I shuddered with suppressed amusement—or was it a tormenting and nervous pity? I don't know. Oh, Lord! Now he will kiss me again; what does he find in that! It was only much later than I found the meaning of it; but in those days I turned my face away as much as I could. And then Beda gave me a clumsy poke with his cold nose, somewhere near my ear; I should have preferred to wipe my cheek—never mind, if only I got through with it! "You are cold," Beda whispered reproachfully; and somehow I felt terribly ashamed of being so cold. In another way, I saw in it, God knows, some romantic and peculiar quality of my own, which I tried to make as intriguing as possible, particularly for the girls. For several years I was under the impression that I was of a cold and inaccessible disposition.

It is slight enough; it has that restless evasive humour which plays with the reader and which is not a little fey; but Capek was an expert in the flat innocence of human egoism; whether it is in the grotesque form of the awful bourgeois beetles of *The Insect Play* rolling along "our little property" of dung; or in such a portrait as this one from *The Cheat*. Such an idiosyncrasy as his is inconceivable in our society, and one looks mournfully at the crushing of European variousness which has taken place since his death.

V. S. PRITCHETT

MONGOLIA

Mongol Journeys. By OWEN LATTIMORE. *Cape.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Lattimore is one of Mr. Roosevelt's singularly intelligent and progressive envoys, and is now on a mission to Chung-king. The present book deals with a journey, made entirely in Mongol style, with camels as the only transport, to Ejen Horo in the Ordos, to witness the annual sacrifice to the spirit of Jenghiz Khan. He gives a very full and valuable account of the ceremony, which seems to ante-date Lamaism, for the Lamas, so prominent otherwise in this highly ecclesiasticised region, play a subordinate part. Mr. Lattimore is an authority on folk-lore, and has interspersed his book with Mongol legends. He is likely to become the subject of a culture-hero legend himself, for as the result of a disquisition by him on the difference between the problem of steppe-bandits and that of urban gangsters, a Mongol prince was induced to instal the telephone throughout his land.

> The telephone poles were comically crooked and the phones were absurd old hand-winders; but the system worked as far as local bandits were concerned. . . . I remember that the magistrate asked what would happen if bandits cut the wires, and I suggested that if whenever a call failed between two points, the police were to act on the assumption that there were bandits between these two points, it would be just as effective.

The author gives vivid pictures of several Mongols, including his camel-man, Arash. But, strangely enough, the two figures who stand out in relief—in engagingly comic relief—are both Europeans and incidentally both Germans. One is Zimmermann, the meteorologist to Sven Hedin's Sino-Swedish expedition.

> "He sat for two years watching clocks, and writing down what they said," was Arash's description of him. "Indeed, the Germans must be a formidable people," Arash went on. "Take Zimmermann. Couldn't do a thing. Leaving out the clocks, what did he know? Not a thing. A fine man, the best of all; but he had to be looked after all the time."

The other is Professor Lessing, who, in order to study Lama ritual, used to take part, properly robed, in the services at the Lama temple in Peking. But on Sundays he had to hurry away in the middle of the service to perform at the German Lutheran church, where he was organist. Both are perfect types of the "harmlos" German, perfect from our point of view, concerning whose existence Lord Vansittart is so sceptical.

Mr. Lattimore makes many incisive judgments. Yen Hsi-shan, the "model Governor" of many books on China, figures as "addicted to trade, 'squeeze' and the opium traffic." Our author has nothing good to say of the Japanese and is convinced of their ultimate defeat; but he is very critical of Chinese exploitation in Mongolia. He is as familiar with the past as with the present, and his historical asides are always accurate and scholarly. One speculation may be questioned. He attributes the "religious or mystic outlook" of the Mongols to the survival of nomadism. But Tibet, not on the whole a nomad country, has preserved the same outlook despite its very different economy. The illustrations are excellent; but there is neither map nor index, and both would have been useful.

ARTHUR WALEY

MODIGLIANI

Artist Quarter. By CHARLES DOUGLAS. *Faber.* 18*s.*

One cannot deny that Mr. Douglas has fulfilled the modest purpose he sets out in his preface—to give us a picture of the 1900–1920 life of Montmartre and Montparnasse, with Modigliani as its central theme. The drinks and drugs, parties, poverty and squalor are all there. Yet at the mention of the man who was probably the greatest portrait painter our century has produced we cannot help wanting something more: his frolics and capers are as dull as the tale of any dead binge, and a few dry facts, such as that he was descended from Spinoza and has a son and daughter alive now, are about all that we can glean of new interest.

Modigliani was the youngest son of an impoverished Jewish family of the Italian middle class. He was extremely handsome, vigorous and high-spirited, but tubercular from the age of 17. At 22 he arrived in Paris to become an artist. He plunged into the dissolute life of the cafés and bistros. For 14 years he led a dissolute life, made love to all and sundry, caroused with Utrillo, took hashish, tore off his clothes at parties and shouted out poems by Ronsard in the Paris nights. At the age of 35 his health could stand no more.

These are the trivialities told in this book, and they seem to have little bearing on his work, which is what matters to us. After all, the world he had entered was not given up merely to debauchery: the fauves and the cubists, negro art and primitive paintings were debated all day, while behind these pre-occupations towered the figure of Cézanne. It needed considerable assurance for an artist to avoid being submerged in the turmoil, and very few of the names Mr. Douglas mentions will be heard in twenty years' time. Yet, stimulated by his surroundings, Modigliani was able to digest the many influences in the air and use them to enrich the talent with which he was born. He started as a sculptor, but after a time this proved too costly and he turned to painting. In the works of sculpture he left, he never realised himself or fully avoided copying the negro and romanesque sculptures that fascinated him. Yet in all his work his feeling for outline is never at fault. He was a natural master of the mysterious stillness and rhythm at that critical meeting-place of the planes. These are still more apparent in the lyric beauty of the line drawings with which he littered the bars of Paris. This feeling became the basis of his oil painting, a pure sensitive line, with echoes of Botticelli in it, setting out on the canvas a balanced organisation of forms, caressing the curves of a neck, a chin, a hand on a chair. He developed a highly formal manner, an extraordinary blend of Italian draughtsmanship, Congo forms, and post-impressionist influence. Within it he found the means to an easy simple expression. People are usually shocked by the superficial oddity and never get over it. But though the eyes may be blue patches, the necks elongated tubes, the attitudes stiff and unnatural, the human qualities

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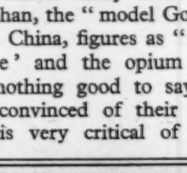

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MICHAEL JOSEPH

of charm, vice, pathos and humour are so apparent in his best portraits that the characters of the subjects are unmistakable, even if we might not recognise their appearance in the street. People who are attracted by these unique works begin by saying "no one ever looked like that," and end by seeing a Modigliani in every face. There is no artist of our time by whom one would so much like one's friends to have been painted.

The nicest character in Mr. Douglas's book is Zborowski, the Polish poet, who made such noble efforts to help the wayward painter. He was that unusual bird, a picture dealer who liked pictures. For those who wish to hear where and when Picasso, Derain, Marie Laurencin, etc., dined and drank together, this book will be a gold-mine.

How did an art of such refinement and taste emerge from such an undisciplined life? Mr. Douglas does not tell us. Perhaps these contrasts are commoner than we suppose. After all, Hitler is a vegetarian.

EARDLEY KNOLLYS

INTERPRETING THE WORD

The Great Tribulation. By J. BERNARD NICKLIN. *Covenant Publishing Co.* 4s. 6d.

Let the Bible Help You. 1,500 Helpful Scriptural Selections. Compiled by GEORGE PERRY DIXON. *Allen and Unwin.* 3s. 6d.

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The comparatively recent discovery that "The Abomination that maketh Desolate" bears strong resemblance to the *Air Bomber* (and the aggressor powers employing it) is a clue to unravelling the mystery. We understand now why Christ depicted the Tribulation as coming with such extraordinary suddenness; why when the Desolator should appear, it would be dangerous to remain indoors. . . .

(But more dangerous, surely, out-of-doors; has prophecy failed here?)

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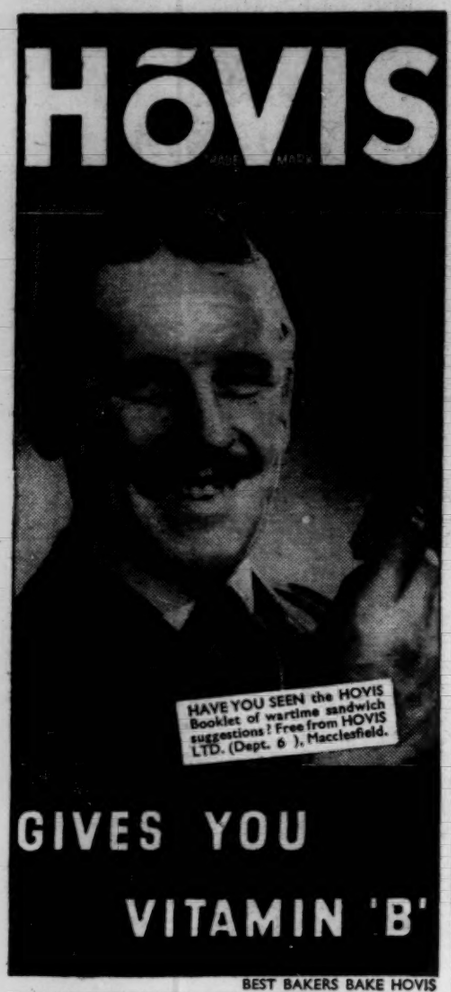
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terrible ordeal. All this at once becomes understandable when "Hostile Aircraft" is substituted for the phrase "Abomination of Desolation."

Many such substitutions are suggested—or is it, commanded? For fig read modern Jewry, which gives us quite a new parable about Jewry-trees. For vine read Great Britain; then Noah, drunk in his tent, must have been the first Imperialist jingo. For "wall of untempered cement" read League of Nations. Mr. J. Bernard Nicklin provides material for a version in a new Basic English. But is he infallible? Why does he interpret Ariel as meaning London, when surely it refers to the B.B.C.? And what about Russia? Russian participation in the war, of course, is too recent and unexpected for prophecy to have aimed right, but still I feel it is a blot on *The Great Tribulation* that Russia should have been consistently misplaced: in one chapter among the helpers of the Beast, in another as joint invader, with the Nazis, of Palestine. "This act of unprovoked aggression," remarks Mr. Nicklin, "would not pass unchallenged." Certainly it shouldn't, even in the pages of *The Great Tribulation*. The trend of Mr. Nicklin and of British-Israel seems to be anti-German, anti-Communist, anti-League of Nations, anti-modern-times and anti-commonsense. "No finer tonic," as the blurb says, "than its compelling conclusions can be recommended for these dark days."

But *Let the Bible Help You* at times runs it close. This is a collection of 1,500 "helpful" texts. Turn to the section headed "For Business and Sales People." There's no shrinking here from closely applying the Word. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" acquires a new meaning as a text for "businessmen and sales people." So, too, does "Lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up" as aid for "singers, orators and others." Other headings, with suitable texts, are "No Lonesomeness," "Wisdom Needed for Success" and "Business Activities should be free from Anxiety." On the whole I prefer Mr. Nicklin's weird prophecy-hunting to Mr. Dixon's framed texts.

G. W. STONIER

A POET'S BEGINNINGS

In the Mill. A Chapter of Autobiography. By JOHN MASEFIELD. *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Masefield has been true to his own technique in deciding to write no rambling chronology of his life. Maybe he intends later to select other aspects and other adventures. In this short book he has chosen a period during which he found the delights of reading, and the glorious pains of first writing. And those activities coincided with a bread-and-butter job which possessed an apt symbolism, that helped him quickly to see his way into the secret, the first principle, of all effort at making something worth while. That is, therefore, the secret of all art.

After his schooling on the *Conway*, and his apprenticeship at sea, he left the sea and took a job in a carpet factory on the outskirts of New York. This was in the nineties, when New York was surrounded by beautiful country, of maple and sumach, within walking distance for the tired artizan seeking fresh air of an evening. The woods, and the stretch of river with the cliffs of the opposite shore, filled him, in summer, with that urgent rapture with which his work is familiar. It is the most pronounced quality of his verse and prose, giving it a restlessness and drive, a keen emotional edge, that can act like an intoxicant upon the reader. It accounts, too, for the texture of his writing; a certain looseness, a rhythm so free that sometimes it sprawls; a phrase so swinging that sometimes it bangs the wrong note.

The symbolism of that job in the carpet factory was this; that it made the youngster conscious of the joy of design, of the necessity of design. It made him think on from this element along social needs, so that he saw the wrongness of a system of labour whereby workers fell into routine processes that departmentalised their vitality and their constructive faculties, until they lost all interest and sense of coherence. He is explicit, and even repetitive about this. He takes pains to describe in the most minute way what he did in the factory, what other workers did, and how the jobs should have been co-ordinated. Much of this book is technical, in a general way. But the concentration has an emotional purpose, as in all of Masefield's work. It is intended to show the intensity of interest with which he fell into line with the job, and how he girded against the organisation, or lack of organisation, which tended to dull that interest because of a lack of direction towards a fully explained finished product.

This book is therefore a book for socialists and economists. In this, it is a part of the rest of Masefield's work. I have always wondered why our latter-day pundits in these matters have not paid more attention to John Masefield. I suppose it is for the same reason that they have neglected, or sneered at, or patronised Morris and Ruskin. Emotion has been taboo. Theory has been put before practice. A man like Masefield has been called reactionary. He is no reactionary. He is an unrelenting, fierce, even savage critic of the processes which have made our industrial system, the first stage of the machine-age, a curse instead of a blessing. Masefield never makes the mistake of cursing the machine. He loves the machine. "I have sometimes heard amateur weavers speak as though their work were more honest and better than the work of the power-loom. This seems to me to be bunkum. A good power-loom will make easily and swiftly a web which will last a century; it will weave yards while the hand-loom potters at an inch. The power-loom is a superb and splendid servant. Of course man latterly has used all his machines to destroy some element of his humanity."

That is one example of how the symbolism of the mill worked upon this sensitive and highly acute mind. One of the most interesting things about this book is the way in which it reveals how the writer took hold of his experiences and converted them into the stuff of his writing, and the stuff of his character. He quickly found an impatience toward politics, and especially of the introduction of politics into the ordering of a workshop. He tends, as an artist invariably does, toward a practical faith, a principle which shall get things done in the fullest and most conscious way. He wants for this some form of organisation by craft processes, one such as guild socialism offered, and is likely to offer again when the present upheaval has swept politicians and their systems to hell, and the stark necessities of to-morrow shall force human society to reorganise itself according to work that must be done, and the tools that can do it.

All thinkers along such lines—Morris, Eric Gill, Masefield—shy from abstractions and theories. No writer could be more matter-of-fact than Masefield. He has made the habit a sort of disciplinary humility. He abases himself before the object; loses himself in the joy, the effort of understanding and mastering that object. In this book he thinks out this attitude, and we see him in that effort circumscribing his own awakening personality. We realise that his preoccupation with facts is a simple, emotional one, based on pride, and that he has the soldier's mind, so far as it is concerned with tactics and the most economical way of fulfilling his duty in relation to any particular job. The effect is clean-cut, bald. You will find in this narrative a handful of portraits of men he worked with; the catalogue of a few writers who first pre-

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cipitated his ambitions and his moods; some seasonal pictures of the surrounding woods and waters (with ships on the water); an account of an admirable though pathetic attempt at building up a technique of asceticism. There is no squashy stuff about the floundering of adolescence. This book is the tale of a fight, and it has no self-pity in it. The centre of that fight is the battle for self-expression as a writer. He bought books by chance, or rather by that super-chance which guides a youngster groping his way alone "in worlds unrecognised." Chaucer was the poet who flung the door open upon full-consciousness, and made him set to at the task of writing verse. Keats and Shelley followed. It is not an unusual route, at least among men of that generation. It was the one I followed, so I can appreciate what Masefield's feelings were, and I can share his recognitions. Du Maurier's *Peter Ibbetson* was a landmark. That is interesting because this is a book about a spirit in isolation, and it has always had a special significance to the person engaged upon that exciting but blind experience known as "self-education." As though there were any other form of education!

Gradually, through two happy years during which the young man got on well with his fellow-workers in the mill, and was praised and promoted by the authorities, he gathered his books, and digested their contents. The time came at last when such nourishment made him outgrow his environment, and he burst the bonds. He had saved enough money to pay his passage back to England, but he preferred to keep that nest-egg by him against hard times. He worked his way home, and arrived in time for the aftermath of the Diamond Jubilee. He had come to conquer Troy.

I hope that later chapters of autobiography will give some details of how he succeeded.

RICHARD CHURCH

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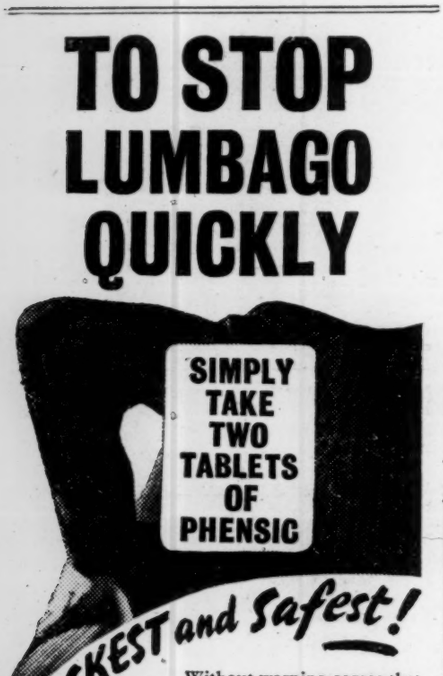

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Week-end Competitions

No. 601

Set by G. W. Stonier

We offer the usual prizes (two guineas and half a guinea) for the best list of ten words from this war's slang. Words of earlier use, though not barred, are discouraged. Any etymological comment will be welcome.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, August 18th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 598

Set by Roger Marvell

Contributors are asked to suppose that Macaulay is continuing his History in the Elysian Fields. A first prize of Two Guineas and a second prize of Half-a-Guinea are offered for the best entries (not more than 250 words) ridiculing the Government's refusal to broadcast *The Internationale*.

Report by Roger Marvell

Macaulay was a most painstaking artist, and while many competitors successfully struck a sentence in his manner, such successes were almost always surrounded by clumsinesses of which Macaulay would have been incapable. D. D. R., for instance, ends well enough:

> Seldom, indeed, have the short-sightedness and trepidation of our Ministers produced evils greater than those which were brought about by that fatal decision. A conjuncture singularly auspicious, a conjuncture at which wisdom and justice might perhaps have reconciled races and sects long hostile, and might have made a united whole of the British nation, was suffered to pass away. The opportunity, once lost, returned no more. Two generations of public men have since laboured with imperfect success to repair the error which was then committed; nor is it improbable that some of the penalties of that error may continue to afflict a remote posterity.

But earlier in his entry he writes:

> The realisation that the terror of the reactionaries was so great, that it forced them to make public their readiness to make use of the most humiliating and degrading of expediencies, produced a contempt which was never to be outlived.

Macaulay never, I fancy, published so halting and encumbered a period. A. P.-R. also ends well:

> After prolonged deliberation the obliging Minister announced that his policy was determined. The number of anthems had, he observed, become excessive; and after most careful and unbiassed consideration, it had been decided that folk-tunes were to be preferred. An impatient House received this with well-merited derision: the *Internationale* shared the silence with the anthems of Luxembourg and Monaco; and the Minister left his post amid the curses and the laughter of millions.

Leslie Johnson, F.E.M., J. W. F. Hurford, M. E. Bardsley, J. H. G. Gibbs, and David Freeman are others who did well, but not consistently. I am left with four entries, in which the flaws, though apparent to the censorious, are less glaring. After much hesitation I recommend that the prizes be divided among them.

PRIZES

I

MACAULAY ON THE GOVERNMENT'S REFUSAL TO BROADCAST *THE INTERNATIONALE*

That the Government should refuse to lend its countenance to the public performance of a melody which, more than any other, symbolises the essential unity of all mankind is incomprehensible, but when that melody is also the chosen anthem of a people whose numbers, courage and equipment may well turn the dread scales of total war, the decision becomes fantastic.

In explanation—or exculpation—it has been asserted that no ideological significance should be read into the action. If this significance be indeed absent what is left?

A tune—one tune among ten thousand others that daily fall upon the ears of the populace without harm to the individual, without hurt to the State.

To put the matter no higher, its inclusion among the anthems of our other Allies would have impeded by no measurable degree the successful prosecution of the war; its omission may well lay our nation open to the ancient, though largely groundless, taunts of hypocrisy, vacillation and self-sufficiency.

"CORNCOCKLE"

II

MACAULAY ON *THE INTERNATIONALE*

. . . In the previous summer, Churchill, by his indomitable courage, had saved the British nation; in this year the defects of his vigorous imagination were to imperil it once more. Few leaders in history have provided so invigorating an inspiration to their people; few have proved themselves in the end so unequal to the event for which the inspiration was demanded. At the very moment, then, when he was heralding with characteristic eloquence the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Pact, he was placing his veto upon the official performance of the Soviet National Anthem. His peculiar imagination envisaged the war clearly, it is true; but he was blinded to its immediate implications partly by inherited prejudice and partly by a habit of seeing contemporary events against a romantically exaggerated background. Therefore, when the German tanks broke into Russia, it was the gigantic tapestry of Bonaparte's fatal campaign that unrolled itself before the British Prime Minister's eyes; and he preferred to signalise the entry of the Russians into the war by a mediocre performance of a march composed in honour of Kutusov than by the famous anthem which epitomised the ideals of the young and vigorous confederacy of republics. The sentiments of the *Internationale* conflicted with his own political prejudices; it awakened no answering historical similitude in his brain; and he gave instructions that it should not be played.

RONALD MASON

III

. . . Let the reader consider how dire the consequences might have been had Russia, on that Sunday evening, been placed on an aerial equality with Luxemburg. It is to be feared, nay, it is certain, that many scores of plethoric and patriotic persons would have declined to listen to the strains of the *Internationale*, not because they dreaded its evil effects upon themselves, not because they disapproved, or even knew, the words of the song, not because they were indignant that a fresh and destructive force had been unleashed against the Germanic hordes, but because they detested the ideology which they believed to be implicit in the air itself.

It was felt in authoritative circles that this exquisite sensibility must at all costs be respected; and respected it was.

We are, however, bound to record that there was not an attorney's clerk or an apothecary's assistant who failed to realise that the infliction of a petty insult on a new and powerful ally was a surprisingly high cost at which to purchase the satisfaction of those persons who were popularly known as the Colonel Blimps of the community.

For ourselves, we should have thought that human ineptitude could hardly have contrived such an extremity of folly within so limited a sphere. We are even inclined to wonder whether posterity will not question the accuracy of our record; but the evidence is as unimpeachable as the folly was monumental.

E. W. FORDHAM

IV

Our opinion, then, is this. We do not know, nor may we ever know, by whose particular authority the ban on the *Internationale* was imposed. We will not have it that it was Mr. Churchill.

We confess that our mind sinks before the contemplation of a being in whom so many aspects of ineptitude are blended together with so much harmony. Our language, rich as it is, affords no words adequate to the task of bringing such a creature before the imagination. Mix together George the Third and Neville Chamberlain and you are still far from having so perfect a jack-pudding. There may have been men as blind, some as stupid, others as churlish, a few as ridiculous, although we have never met with them or read of them. But when we put everything together, blindness, stupidity, churlishness and ridiculousness, the result becomes something that in history we should dismiss as a fiction, and in fiction condemn as a caricature.

ARNOLD HYDE

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By URBANUS

E.P.T. AND ANGLO-EGYPTIAN OIL—"V" MOVE IN EQUITIES—STORE SHARES

My objection to the Excess Profits Tax is not that it is harsh to business—I would take all the profits of business during the war and pay a "fixed salary" compensation to rentiers—but that it destroys the interest which managements used to have in being efficient and economical, and, secondly, that it distributes unevenly and unfairly the burden of taxation as between classes of capital. In particular, it penalises capital which has taken on the greatest risks. This objection is well illustrated by Anglo-Egyptian Oilfields. At the shareholders' meeting this week, Sir Robert Waley Cohen explained that although the gross profits of the company had jumped by £1,000,000 to £2,332,000 in 1940 the net profits had actually declined from £324,000 to £236,000. Thanks largely to the Excess Profits Tax the Company had had to set aside during the year £1,110,000, so that the liquid position had deteriorated by £439,000. The inadequacy of the concession which the Chancellor of the Exchequer made to mining companies in respect of Excess Profits Tax is brought home by this extraordinary result. Anglo-Egyptian Oilfields had a bad profits standard because until recently it had only one source of production—the Hurghada oilfield—and had spent large sums each year searching for new fields. On the discovery of the Ras Sharib field on the other side of the Red Sea its production had risen rapidly—and, of course, its profits, which would normally pay back its large expenditures in the years of exploration. All that the Chancellor has allowed mining companies is an additional percentage standard on capital varying with the life of the mine or field—ranging from 30 per cent. for a life ending in 1946–50 to only 5 per cent. for a life ending in 1961-70. How any accountant can estimate the life of an oilfield the Chancellor did not disclose, but anyone familiar with the oil business will know that it is as uncertain as the life of a political reputation. Believe it or not, the Treasury require the mining company claiming this E.P.T. concession to define (a) the extent of its natural deposits (b) the date by which these deposits would have been exhausted but for the war (c) the amount of additional output due and essential to the war and (d) the profit at the normal rate on this additional output. If these requirements are complied with, I suggest that the chairman of every producing oil company should be made a peer for heroic services rendered to the capitalist system and the Exchequer. This would, indeed, follow the precedence of the last war.

* * *

I need not apologise for drawing attention again to the "V" market in ordinary shares. The rise has been resumed this week. It seems illogical for equities to begin discounting victory or peace at this time—odd to read that Imperial Continental Gas can put on 3½ points last week because of "the better Continental outlook"!—but, as I have said, dealers are so short of stock that it only needs a few opportunists to enter the market to cause quite a spurt in prices. And let us not forget that capital is still being repatriated from America. The chart theorists confidently talk now of the 1941 bull market as having been definitely established when the index of industrial shares broke through the January "high." The four years "bear" market is over, according to the Dow theory, and a new primary trend (which usually lasts five years) has begun. I suppose these theorists will allow the war and fear of war to have been the cause of the "bear" market and that hope of victory is responsible for the turn upwards, but in the life of charts wars seem to count as minor trends. The interesting point about the chart is that the Russian hold-up, which has apparently encouraged and delighted the City more than the War Office, has coincided with a technical situation in the market favouring a rise.

* * *

In spite of the fact that the supply of goods for shops has been curtailed by about 50 per cent. since the beginning of the war, store shares have shared conspicuously in this upward move. Marks and Spencer and Woolworth, which have been as low as 28*s.* and 45*s.* 6*d.* respectively, are now as high as 35*s.* 6*d.* and 56*s.* The rise this week may have been prompted by the remarks of the Retail Trade Committee of the Board of Trade in its questionnaire sent out to shopkeepers. The Government, it said, has made it clear that it will not give compensation for loss of business to traders any more than to any other section of the community, but as any scheme for the fair distribution of the existing stocks of goods may involve the closing down of a number of shops, the Committee is asking whether it is possible for compensation to be paid to the closed-down by those remaining in business. I suppose the market presumes that the small shops will close down and that Woolworth and Marks and Spencer will take over their trade, but I cannot visualise such a scheme meeting with the approval of a House of Commons which is "small capitalist" minded. Incidentally, the Committee is wrong in saying that the Government has not admitted compensation to any class of trader. Under the concentration scheme it has approved of compensation by levy in the cases of industries which have suffered severe concentration.

Company Meeting

BIKAM RUBBER ESTATE

THE 31st ordinary general meeting of the Bikam Rubber Estate, Ltd., was held on August 7th in London, Mr. H. Eric Miller (the Chairman) presiding.

The following is an extract from the Chairman's speech, which was circulated with the report and accounts: Working profits for the year were more than double the amount earned in the previous year, due to the larger crop accounted for, which was 1,726,000 lb. higher than the 1939 figure, an increase in the net sale price of 1.37d. and, thanks to the larger output, a reduction in unit cost of about ¼d. per lb. Tribute receipts from tin mining amounting to £1,368 are included. The area still to be mined under the agreement we made with Chemor River Tin Limited is approximately 28 acres. Negotiations are progressing favourably for the sale to that Company of a further 300 acres of the Sultan Idris division of Chumor Estate at £70 per acre, we retaining the tapping rights until the rubber trees have to be removed by instalments in the course of mining operations.

To meet our estimated liability for Excess Profits Tax we have had to charge against Revenue £55,000 and we are asking you to approve the transfer to Taxation Reserve of £11,000 necessary to enable us to cover the estimated Income Tax liability on the profits earned to December last; also the transfer to Reserve for Cultivation and Replacement of £6,166 to bring that up to £40,000, a useful sum to have in hand to meet present and future replanting commitments; and the transfer of £5,000 to Contingencies Reserve. We are then able to recommend the payment of a final dividend of 6 per cent. less income tax, making, with the interim dividend, 10 per cent. for the year (against 7½ per cent. for 1939).

Our 1941 operations should make a good showing, but the incidence of the Excess Profits Tax limits your interest in the profits. However, I am sure you will share our feeling of satisfaction at thus being able to make a substantial contribution to the War effort. The Report was unanimously adopted.

Company Meeting

PATALING RUBBER ESTATES

THE 21st ordinary general meeting of the Pataling Rubber Estates Limited was held on August 7th, in London, Mr. H. Eric Miller (the Chairman) presiding.

The following is an extract from the Chairman's statement which was circulated with the report and accounts:—

Working profits for the year were £121,856, compared with £58,369 in the previous year—more than double; but the former figure is reduced to £65,856 by the provision which has to be made to cover our Excess Profits Tax liability, estimated at £56,000 as against £3,000 for 1939. The increased profit is due to the larger accountable crop, which was nearly 1,270,000 lb. higher than in 1939, and sold for nearly 1¼d. per lb. more, while the unit cost was fully ¾d. per lb. less as a result of the higher output. The amount before us for disposal to-day is £75,428, and we are asking you to approve the transfer to Taxation Reserve of £12,000 needed to cover the estimated Income Tax liability on the profits earned to December last; also the transfer to Reserve for Cultivation and Replacement of £10,000, which will bring that Reserve up to £37,182, a useful sum to have in hand to meet present and future rejuvenation commitments; and the transfer to Contingencies Reserve of £5,000. You will no doubt approve these proposals and our recommendation to pay a final dividend of 7½ per cent., less income tax, making with the interim dividend of 5 per cent. a total of 12½ per cent. for the year (against 12 per cent. for 1939), leaving the carry forward at £25,542.

Despite a shortage of labour in Malaya, the Visiting Agents report all our properties as being in sound order and showing further agricultural improvement. As I mentioned last year it has been decided to replant the whole of Bukit Blimbing gradually over a period of years, and 92 acres were replanted in the year under review with Prang Besar Isolation Garden seed. That is the extent of replanting done last year, as we do not propose to risk more replanting than can be properly and efficiently carried through with due regard to the labour position and other factors. For the current year we have sanctioned a matter of 238 acres over two of the estates.

It may interest you to know that actual results from the experimental area of Kuala Ketil largely planted with Prang Besar material are very satisfactory. The clonal seed areas at 6 years old yielded at the rate of 900 lb. per acre, and we are told that an outstanding feature of these trees is their rapid bark renewal.

Our 1941 operations should make a good showing, but the incidence of Excess Profits Tax limits your interests in the profits, except that you will, I am sure, share our feeling of satisfaction at being able to make a substantial contribution to the war effort on the successful issue of which all our hopes for the future depend.

The Report was unanimously adopted.

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